

The Larsen Legacy

Volume 1: 1943-1984

Life History of
Stephen Allan Larsen
and
Susan Richards Larsen

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Susan R. Larsen

Dedicated to my husband, Steve,
for his love, his devotion, and his untiring patience
in the midst of our family fray.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all of my children who provided information, essays, and photos when I requested them.

To Lindsay and Stephani who helped me find a publisher and who encouraged the inclusion of photos to make the book more inviting to the reader.

To Shauntel whose insightful suggestions and editing skills provided the “fresh eyes” I needed to look at the manuscript objectively.

To Laurel and the children who shared their husband and father with me during all of those early morning and late-night phone calls.

And finally, to my son, John, whose knowledge of online publishing and continuing encouragement kept me going on this project. For his abilities in formatting and for his continuing patience in talking me through all the computer “stuff” in his phone conferences. Who, despite his relocation to China, continued to mentor and format until the book was finished.

PREFACE

On January 30, 2009, Stephen Allan Larsen passed away unexpectedly of acute leukemia surrounded by loved ones at the family home in Moreland, Idaho. He had been sick for only seven days. He left behind his wife and 10 children, an Indian foster daughter, 35 grandchildren, six siblings, and a shocked and sorrowing community.

His departure and the subsequent outpouring of love and tributes from far and near, crystallized in our minds just what he was and what his life had been. Those of us who loved him best saw with clarity his lifelong devotion to the Lord, to his role as family patriarch, and to the betterment of society. He left for us a rich and lasting legacy.

“The Larsen Legacy: Volume I” is my attempt to capture “in black and white” the events and significant moments that created that legacy. Although any history, written from a personal perspective, is not without error, through months of research, sorting, and editing I have written as accurate an account as I possibly could. This first volume includes the following:

Section I: Steve’s biography - A history of his life from birth until our courtship. Information for this came from scrapbooks, photo albums, missionary journals, letters, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia that he saved over the years. Included also are my personal memories of events and stories that he frequently shared with me about his growing up years. Since he was the eldest of the seven children in his family, his sibling’s recollections of him were sparse. But, his brother, Gary, shared several stories with me that are also included in the narrative.

Section II: My autobiography - A compilation of several personal histories that I have written over the years that include stories and events

that I felt were significant in shaping my life and aspirations.

Section III: Our Life Together - An account of our courtship and marriage and of the happenings in our family from the years 1966 to 1984. Sources for this section include scrapbook memorabilia, photo albums, newspaper clippings, letters, journal entries from both Steve and I, monthly family letters from 1978-90, and essays that were written by us and about us that give insights into the events of those “building” years.

Section IV: Family Memories - A compilation of family memories by topic. This section covers memories from 1966 to the present and are not in chronological order.

Section V: Additional pictures - Although most pictures are included in the text, several arrived late and have been added at the conclusion.

Publishing this book has been rewarding. Perhaps more than anything else, it has been reaffirming. As I have mentally traversed again those early years I have seen the Lord’s hand in our lives. I have had it reaffirmed again and again that truly He has guided, protected, and surrounded our family with His tender mercies.

And so to my sweet children, whose arrivals, antics and escapades make up the substance of this account, let me say this: the gospel is true and the Lord’s promises are sure. Our families can be “together forever” and are certainly worth our best efforts. In this endeavor we can trust that if we are doing all that we can do and living the gospel with exactness, the Lord will surround us with His love and come to our aid in this most important work. Truly, as Nephi said, “by small means the Lord can bring about great things.” (1 Nephi 16:29)

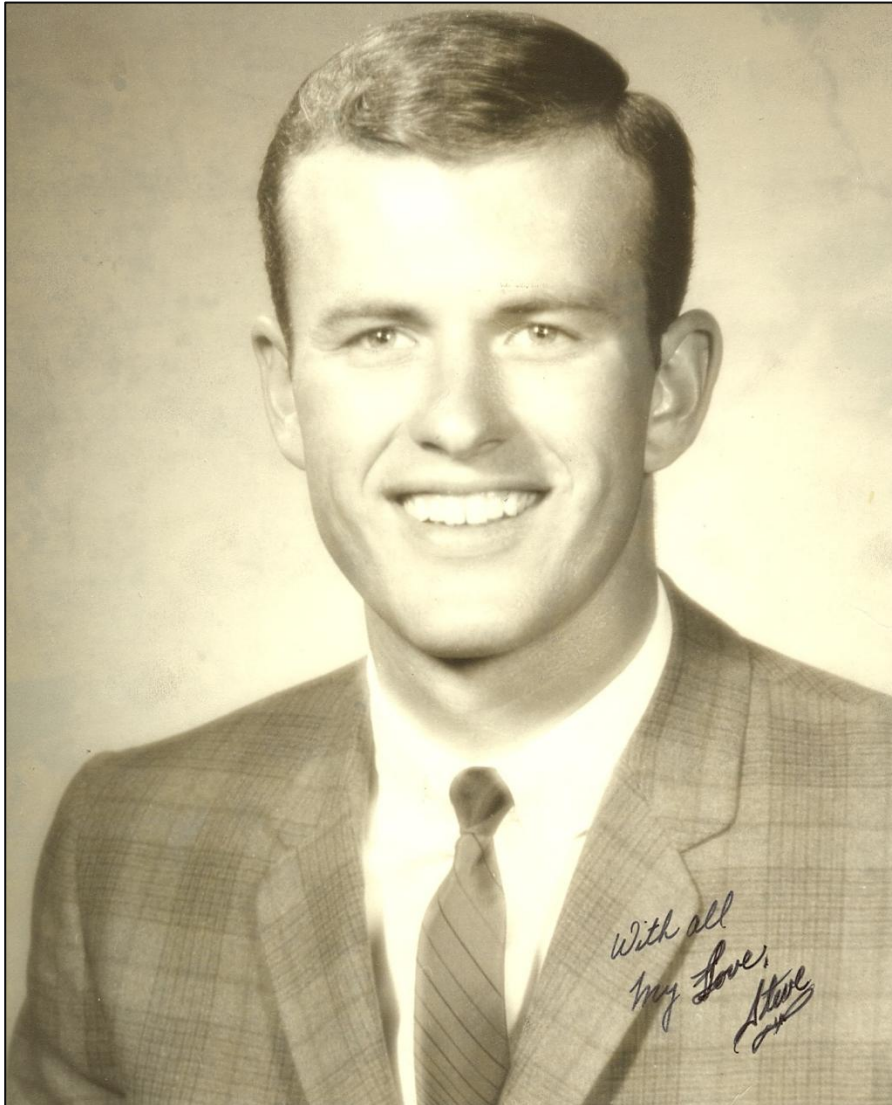
Mom

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SECTION I: STEPHEN ALLAN LARSEN - BIOGRAPHY

by his wife, Susan



Stephen Allan Larsen, born December 8, 1943, was the first child of Allan Franklin Larsen and Barbara Grace Elswood. His paternal grandparents are James Berkeley Larsen and Florence Bywater Tingey and his maternal grandparents are Alfred Earnest Francis Elswood and Josephine Katherine Bolander. His siblings are: Gary (Linda Lamprecht) of Moreland, Idaho;

Stafford (Kaye Smith) of Lehi, Utah (his first wife, Kathy Wakefield, died in 2006); Jeanie (Scott) Gentry of Show Low, Arizona; Mark (Rita Platzek) of Thornton, Colorado; Richard (Terry Hunt) of Pocatello, Idaho; and Karen (Jim) Vanfleet of Layton, Utah. When asked about his family of origin, he would very proudly say, "My parents raised a basketball team and two cheerleaders!"

His father, Allan, was born on April 4, 1919, on the ranch in Lower Presto (near Wapello, Idaho) and his mother, Barbara, was born on July 10, 1920, at the family home in Shelley, Idaho.

Although they lived within a short distance of each other growing up, they attended different high schools. Barbara writes the following regarding her early interactions with Allan:

"We had dated a few times before he left on his mission and had written a few letters to each other, but we were nothing more than good friends."

Following high school Allan attended Utah State University in Logan, Utah. He worked on his father's farm the fall of '38 to help get the crop out and then attended the winter/spring quarters. The following year he enrolled in the winter quarter again but when it was over he left



college to go home and help with spring planting. He stayed to work a full year before leaving on a mission to the New England States.

Meanwhile, Barbara graduated from Shelley High School and then attended Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. After an enjoyable year of college, she returned home to Shelley to find a job since she could not afford

to go another year. She often commented, *"I have always been so thankful that I filled that year with music. My academic classes have long been forgotten, but my memories of my music classes will always be with me."*

Barbara was hired as a secretary for the County Superintendent of Schools and for Mr. Cory, the Probate Judge. She thoroughly enjoyed her time working in the court house and proved to be



capable and efficient in her responsibilities.

In January of '42 Allan returned home from his mission. Whereas many young men his age were enlisting or being drafted to fight for their country in the Second World War, Allan was given a reprieve since he was a farmer's son and was returning to the fields of Idaho to produce the food to feed a nation as well as its troops.

Then fate played a hand in getting them together. The Shelley LDS Stake was presenting the production, "The Barrett's of Wimpole Street". Barbara and Allan were chosen for the two lead parts of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning and soon their romance blossomed. They were married on June 24, 1942, in the Salt Lake Temple and subsequently moved to the Larsen farm where they lived with J. Berkeley and Florence until a labor house was renovated for them to use.

Living with Allan's parents for six months certainly wasn't ideal for the newlyweds and they were grateful when the house was finally ready and they had a place of their own.

Barbara went right to work making it a home and they spent their first Christmas together in that little house. Allan said of it, "*Of course, she*



(Barbara) fixed it up as, in fact, she always does everything that she has. We had a little Christmas tree covered with angel hair. It was beautiful. There has never been a prettier Christmas tree. I bought her a piano. She bought me a movie camera. She was sure surprised when she came home and saw that piano. Father thought that was the most foolish thing that a working man could ever do was to spend that much money for a piano. Mother thought it was just the right thing to do. She said, 'Your wife and your kids will always enjoy that piano.' Stephen has it now. A lot of good has come out of that piano."



The camera that Barbara purchased for Allan was also a good investment. Through the years it captured the excitement of many family outings as well as Christmas mornings when the children gathered around the Christmas tree opening the treasures that Santa brought.

Although following their marriage Barbara continued to work at the court house in Blackfoot, she

longed to start their family. When she finally got pregnant, they were thrilled. Early in the pregnancy she developed appendicitis and needed to have her appendix removed. Fortunately, the surgery went without complications and her pregnancy progressed with no further problems.

Although the baby wasn't due until January, on December 7, 1943, Barbara started into labor. She went to the doctor who immediately sent her to the Idaho Falls LDS Hospital and put her in ice packs to see if that would stop the labor pains. It didn't. And so on December 8th at 4:08 in the afternoon, a little hollow-chested boy, who wasn't expected to live through the night, was born, weighing in at 6 pounds, 4 ounces. He was six weeks early and rarin' to go! Who could have known that night that this little boy would someday be a 225 pound, six foot four "mountain of molten muscle?"

Stephen was blessed by his father, Allan, in the Goshen Ward on February 6, 1944. The following is an entry Barbara made in Stephen's baby book when he was about four months old: *"Such a sunny-natured little son we have. Just a word to him while passing by his crib sets him to kicking his feet and getting so excited. And when*



he smiles that darling little one-sided grin of his--- I just get all aquiver with joy!

March 25th was a red-letter day. We started adding a little variety to his menu by feeding him green beans and applesauce. He also accepted his Gerber's oatmeal with no fuss after several previous unsuccessful attempts on my part to get him to eat it.

At 3 ½ months he was failing to gain weight so I had to start giving him a supplementary feeding. He





amused me very much one day by saying, "a-gee". I told Bus (Allan), 'I guessed the baby has already picked out his college'."

Steve had a happy childhood with plenty of room to roam and siblings to play with. His little brother, Gary, was just eleven months younger and the two of them were like twins. Barbara was a good seamstress and often made them look-alike outfits including cowboy chaps and vests. Stafford was born just two years after Gary and the three of them found all kinds of things to do and enjoyed the wide open spaces and advantages of living on a farm.

Of course, living on a farm did have disadvantages. Like the time Stephen and Gary were playing on a ditch bank and Steve stepped into a soft spot and went tumbling into the ditch. He panicked and did his best to climb out but each time he tried, the slippery ditch bank thwarted his attempts. Gary, seeing his struggle, grabbed him by his shirt and started yelling for all he was worth. Fortunately, Barbara heard their screams and quickly came



to their rescue.



Steve remembered a winter when his Grandpa took a horse-drawn sleigh to the Blackfoot River, cut huge ice chunks out of the river ice, loaded them onto the sleigh, and stored them in the old pump house under some straw to be used in their ice box in the warmer months ahead. He also vaguely remembered his father feeding his flock of sheep by using an old Caterpillar to haul the hay to them in the winter months.

Being the oldest child had its occasional disadvantages. Steve related how his mother

wanted him to take dance lessons. Since this was not his idea of a manly thing to do, he objected, but finally gave in to her pleadings. His awkwardness and embarrassment at being one of the only boys in the dance class didn't seem to dampen his mother's enthusiasm. Later, when she came to pick him up, she was met by one sheepish little boy who had wet his pants under the stress of the





situation. She never mentioned dance lessons again; the experience made a believer out of her.

(Excerpt from Barbara's history) Stephen's description of spring (when he was four): "Spring comes with her long arms and gathers all the snow up into the sky." I thought that was very poetic. People used to ask Stephen and Gary if they were twins. Stephen said, "All the time when people do tell us if we are twins, we tell them no, we are apart." We were driving through New Sweden one day and commenting on the beauty of the country and what a nice place it would be to live. Stephen said, "I wouldn't like to live this far away from home." He didn't seem to realize that wherever we lived, it would be home."

Steve loved Christmas and once commented, "One of my memories of Christmas as a boy was the excitement to find out what gifts I was receiving. Sleep was next to impossible on Christmas Eve. And it seemed

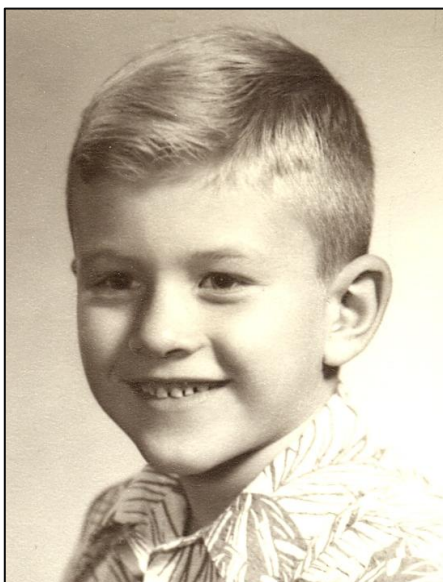
that I had to go to the bathroom several times that night to try to get a glimpse of big boxes or shiny objects as I passed the living room

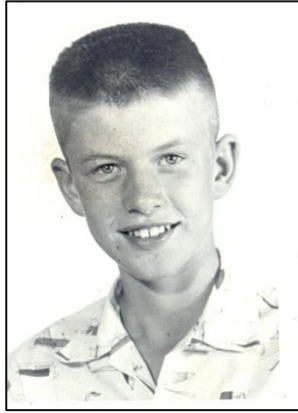
entry. Sometimes we even crawled out the window and tried to peek into the living room with a flashlight to see what gifts were there."



Another time when Steve was a little older, he and Gary decided that they wanted to ride their bikes to Primary. For some reason Primary that day was held in Firth and they had quite a lengthy ride by the time they arrived. Then when it was time to go home, the wind came up and was so strong that several times they got off of their bikes and just pushed them along. They were so worn out, and kept hoping that someone would come along and rescue them; but it wasn't to be. They finally made it home. That was the last time they attempted that!

One time their cousin, Paul Elswood, from Idaho Falls came to visit them and they went hunting with their BB guns. Eventually they shot a morning dove. Then they plucked it, cleaned it, and made a fire on which to roast it. But, being inexperienced with outdoor cooking, they tried to cook it over too hot of a fire and soon had a bird that was black on the outside and raw on the inside. Nevertheless, they sat down to their meal and ate it, all the time trying to convince each other that it was delicious!





As the years passed more children joined the young family and their lives were full and happy. Allan was heavily involved in farming as well as in Church work and Barbara thrived as a capable and talented homemaker and young mother.

One of the family's favorite places to explore was Wolverine Canyon and 40 Horse Cave. They designated a special tree as their "family tree" and each year, as they picnicked in the canyon, they carved into the tree trunk the name of the latest addition to the family. This was just one of the many endearing traditions that strengthened their familial bonds in those early years.

Stephen was baptized in the Shelley Stake Tabernacle by his father on Saturday, February 2, 1952, and confirmed by him the next day in the Goshen Ward sacrament meeting.

Although these early years were ones of contentment for the children, Allan was

becoming increasingly frustrated with working for wages on his Dad's farm. He once said to his father, "I want to own

something, even if it's a water bag!" After about two years he began leasing 160 acres of his Dad's farm and was able to buy a tractor to farm it. Later, when he expressed his desire to buy the land that he had been leasing, his father responded, "I have six children, not just one." Allan never asked his father again.

Finally after leasing land from his Dad for about eight years, Allan realized that he was going to have to go out on his own and so he began looking for a place that he could get into with the resources he had available. He bought a place on the desert west of Blackfoot in the spring of '53 and for a while was farming both the Wapello leased ground as well as the desert place. In 1956 he moved the family to the Blackfoot area. The following excerpt from Allan's life history describes the circumstances of that time. (Dictated to his daughter, Karen)

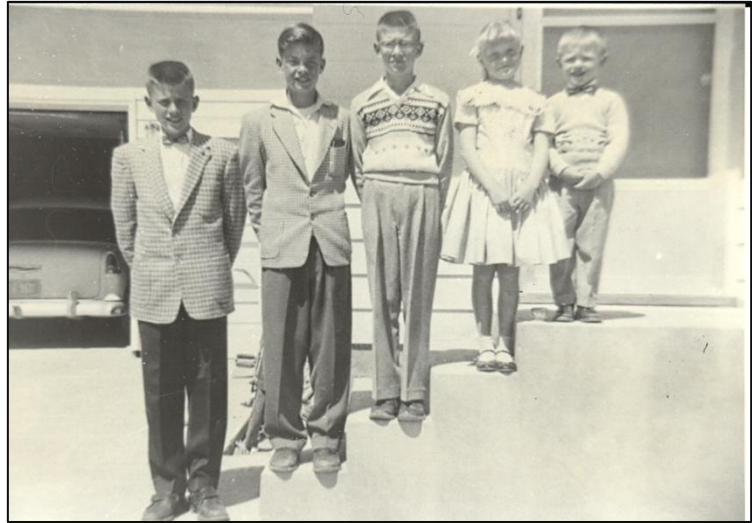


"We looked for a place to move into and we couldn't find anything. Finally your mother said, 'Well, we could live in that little house on the farm.' I said, 'Would you?' She said, 'Yes.' We moved into that little house on the farm. It was three rooms. It had belonged to Bishop Haney before he built his new house. When they moved it out they had to put a cable around it to hold those three rooms together because they had been put on separately. It had a little lean-to shed that I made into a bathroom; well, a toilet at least.

There wasn't any heat in it. It was outside the kitchen door. So it was pretty chilly whenever it got cold. We bathed in a tin tub.

We didn't have a well. We bought a buoy, a Navy buoy and put legs on it. It held about two hundred and fifty gallons. We would start the big irrigation pump and open a valve and fill the tank with water. By gravity the water would run into the kitchen. We had two taps in the kitchen. We had a hot water heater out on that porch too, so we had hot water, and electric hot water heater and a toilet out on the porch and the bathing was done in the tin tub in the kitchen. If we ran out of water on Sunday we would have to go down and start the irrigation pump and run it long enough to fill that buoy again so we would have water to use. It was a troublesome, miserable situation, but we made it. Barbara made the house look like a home again. It was a nice looking little place. We heated it with a coal stove. We had Stephan, Gary, and Stafford, and Jeanie. (Karen) Well, Mark was born in 53, wasn't he?" (Allan) We probably had all of those. You and Rick were probably the only ones that weren't born."

Steve was in the last six weeks of the sixth grade when they moved to the



desert. He was a typical farm boy, helping out with the various tasks that farming involves. His father writes, *"The kids were always involved in the farming operation. They learned to work. Those little kids would move those forty foot sprinkler lines with one at each end of them until they got big enough to carry one alone.*

A lot of people talk about playing with their kids, but teaching them to work is even more important in my mind. There aren't very many families anymore that can work together, but a farm family can. There is a closeness that develops through that working relationship."

Soon after moving to the desert they began to build a new home at 848 West Tabor Road. Initially they had intended to build it on their farm but since farming the desert was a fairly



new and unproven venture, they could only get a loan to build within one mile of Moreland; so that is what they did. They did some of the work themselves and soon moved from their house on the desert to their new home and began to put down some roots and become a part of the community.

Steve attended 7th and 8th grade in the Thomas school building and then when he was in 9th grade he attended the new Snake River High School on Highway 39 that had been recently completed.

Steve was a bright young man and growing up on the farm and being around animals he had pretty much figured out about the “birds and the bees” without anyone cluing him in. One night when his mother was driving him to Mutual, she said, “Steve, there is something that I want to talk to you about.” “Oh, boy!” he thought. “Here comes that facts of life talk.” He just sat quietly and she began by saying, “There isn’t a Santa Claus!” That was it. That was what she wanted him to know. He tried to keep a straight face and not let on that he was way ahead of her. Every time he would tell that story, he would have a good laugh!

Steve was of a gentle temperament and a quiet disposition. He was an avid reader, an interest that stayed with him his whole life. As a boy he read many of the classics and he especially enjoyed stories of intrigue and adventure. Stories of Sherlock Holmes were among his favorites. Some of his favorite authors in later years included Tom Clancy, John Grisham, Dick Francis, Louis

L’Amour, and C.S. Lewis.

He also enjoyed working with his hands and became involved with leather-working, stamp collecting, and was active in the Boy Scouts of America. His horizons widened as he worked on the various merit badges and (with his mother’s help and prodding) he earned the rank of Eagle on March 4, 1963, at the age of 19.

When he was in eighth grade he hand-tooled a leather saddle and entered it in the Eastern Idaho State Fair, receiving a blue ribbon. The following article ran in the Blackfoot News in the “Here’s a Thought” by Agnes Just Reid:

The Eastern Idaho State Fair has come and gone. Hundreds of the exhibitors went home with blue ribbons; other hundreds went home with red ribbons or white ribbons; some went home without a ribbon of any color, just a heavy heart. One boy went home with a blue ribbon and a very light heart.

He is Steven Larsen, the fourteen year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Larsen of Moreland. His exhibit may have been missed by many for it was in a poorly lighted corner of the art building. It is a hand tooled western saddle made by the skillful hands of this tall boy. He is one of those teenagers we hear so many unpleasant things



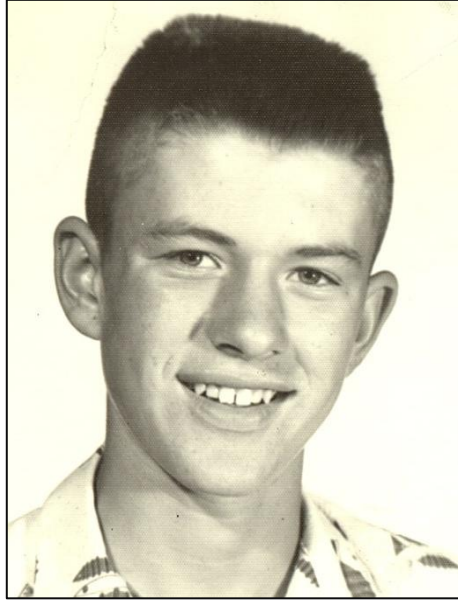
about.

On the saddle should have been noted the number of "man hours" that have gone into the job. "Man hours" they really are for only men can assume a task that goes on and on over a period of years and follow it to completion. While other boys have been playing ball, watching TV, taking girls to shows, or just doing nothing at all, Steven has constructed something that his grandchildren will point to with pride. It is a family heirloom—a thing that will be cherished for generations.

The saddle is Kipling's poem expressed in leather: "And only the Master shall praise us and only the Master shall blame; and no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame, but each for the joy of working and each in his separate star, shall draw the thing as he sees it, for the God of things as they are."

Steven has done this work of art just for "the joy of the working." It is a joy that can never be taken away from him. He won a blue ribbon, but that was just an incident. He was not competing against anyone. When he won there was no heart sickening feeling that someone else had lost. Because of this, other boys in Idaho will be devoting hours of patient work to creating something lasting. While they are still teenagers they will be building for the future. We thank you, Steven Larsen.

The experience with the saddle was just one example of Steve being a "finisher". He carried through to a successful conclusion whatever project he took on. He was also very organized and his room, closet, and drawers reflected this penchant for cleanliness and order. This trait



was recognized early on and he became his mother's "chief garage cleaner" for many years until his younger brother, Mark, took over the task.

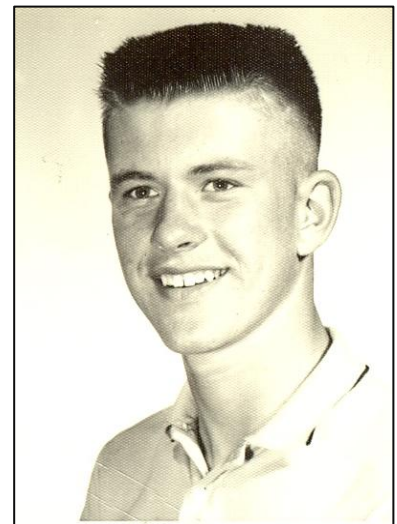
LIFE ON THE FARM

Steve took pride in his ability to work hard. He would move pipe early morning and evening and would often time himself on how long it took to move a "line." He said that he would even run from one pipe to the next just to beat his own best

record. He remembered finding bombs (luckily they had already been detonated) that had been dropped when the desert was used as a practice bombing range during the Second World War. He also remembered the surprise of occasionally finding a rattle snake lying next to the cool pipes on a hot summer day or wound around the stem of the pipe. His days moving pipe and working on the farm with his father and brothers helped him develop both mentally and physically into an exemplary young man.

Steve was observant and learned how to be a handy man from his Dad. He was so good at figuring out how things worked that his mother once let him take the piano apart, replace broken parts, clean it, and put it back together again; no small feat for anyone, let alone a teenage boy.

Steve enjoyed being his father's "side kick" and as he grew older he



became a valuable part of his Dad's farming operation during the summer months when he was on vacation from school. His involvement extended into the fall harvest as well. Many were the late nights riding the potato combine in the cold and blustery weather. One of his favorite memories is of the hot chocolate and treats that Barbara would invariably bring out to the crew; taking pity on them during the long, cold, and dirty hours in the spuds.

Perhaps if there was a disadvantage to working on the farm, it was that his Dad was not able to pay him for his work due to the financial straits the farming operation was in. And so growing up he didn't have any money of his own to use or budget. His mother would buy his clothes, pay for his other needs, and when he went away to



college and served his

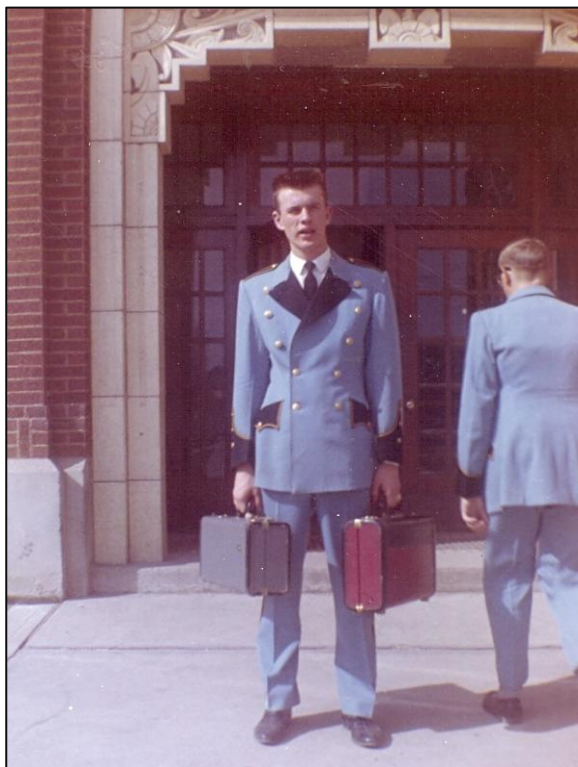
mission, his Dad provided the needed funds. Although it was understandable how this situation developed, as he got older and took on the responsibilities of his own family, he often lamented his lack of experience in money management and wished things could have been different.

JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

During his junior high years Steve suffered with the typical self-doubts and clumsiness of a young man growing to manhood. His shyness in social situations sometimes kept him a little aloof and hesitant to participate in some activities.

When the time came for trying out for the school basketball team, he decided to give it a try since by that time he was stretching out and stood almost a head taller than many of his classmates. But, he was intimidated by the other boys who seemed to be so much more coordinated and adept at the necessary skills. After a few practices he decided that he didn't want to continue, but he needed an excuse to quit so he told the coach that he needed to be home after school to help with the family chores.

This wasn't entirely true since his parents had always been supportive of his activities and



would have worked things out for him if he had really wanted it. It wasn't until later in high school that he finally had the courage to try out again and was chosen to be on the varsity squad his senior year. He spent most of his time sitting on the bench during the games, but still enjoyed the opportunity to train and scrimmage with the other team members. He always regretted that he hadn't stayed with it earlier. Some of the other players included John Jones, Blaine Dance, and Bob Marcum. He grew to love the game, became a good player, and continued playing on the "old men's" Church teams long after he was married.

Steve enjoyed his high school years and was close friends with Dan Benson, Max Leavitt, Leonard Hart, Ray Marcum, and Richard Orr. Although he was well liked, he never felt like he was a part of the "in" crowd. He wasn't one to date much although there were several girls with whom he was good friends. He had a crush on Juliet Wheeler for most of his high school years but always found himself in the role of "silent admirer".

He had the highest regard for his principal, Wilson Harper, and felt that he was always direct and fair with the students. Their friendship continued long after he graduated and the Harper/Larsen family connection continues to this day.

His main involvement was with the music programs in both the junior high and high school. He joined the band playing trumpet and took private lessons as well. He really loved the trumpet and his mother always encouraged him to develop his talents. As he grew in his abilities, he had many opportunities to perform at talent shows and dance intermissions, and was a member of a trumpet trio (Chad Watt, Jerry Rowe, and Steve) that performed throughout the

area. Barbara accompanied them on the piano. One of their favorite pieces was "Bugler's Holiday".

When he was a junior and senior he performed trumpet solos in the Farm Bureau Talent Show and both years won the right to advance to the district and regional finals. He received "Superior" ratings as a junior and senior at the district music festivals and earned a letter in band both years. One of the most impressive solo numbers that he learned was "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White". Long after his high school and college years, he would get this music out, dust it off, practice it to get his "lip" in shape, and perform it at various events. It was always a crowd pleaser.

One of the stories he would often tell of their trumpet trio was of the trip they took following their graduation from high school. As the story goes they were visiting Yellowstone Park and just happened upon a group of cute girls who were also on a road trip. Well, one thing led to another and the girls offered to teach them how to kiss! Since they were pretty much "babes in the woods" regarding things like that (but always appreciative of opportunities for higher education), they got bold and accepted the offer! That's as far as the story went when Steve told it, but I have always been grateful that the girls



didn't teach those naïve farm boys anything else! Besides, it was pretty presumptuous of the girls to think they could teach these trumpet players about anything involving the lips!

Although Steve's main involvement was in band, he had a wonderful bass/baritone voice and was an asset throughout his life in various choirs and musical productions. During his early years he especially loved gathering around the piano at home and singing with his brothers and Dad. Barbara was a gifted accompanist and the brothers' voices were strong and mellow and blended perfectly. It continued to be a source of satisfaction to all of them as they matured and had opportunities to sing together.

It was a source of pride to Steve that he sang a bass solo in "The Messiah" the year the Blackfoot Northwest Stake performed it for the community. Another favorite at Christmas time was "Birthday of a King" in which he soloed. During our courtship and marriage Steve and I were frequently asked to sing duets on various programs and at sacrament meetings. We enjoyed performing "Edelweiss" from the Broadway musical, "The Sound of Music" and "A House Becomes A Home" as well as hymns from the LDS Hymnal. Steve sang the melody and I harmonized with the alto. Later he carried on the tradition of singing with his own children. He loved gathering around the piano and singing the hymns of Zion.



Steve graduated from Seminary as a junior and was selected to speak on the graduation program. He also directed the class choir that performed "I Need Thee Every Hour". As a junior Steve was elected student body vice president. The next year he was a candidate for student body president but was defeated by Arrol Wheeler in the final election.

He was a good student receiving mostly A's and B's throughout his high school years and as a junior scored a 97 on the National Merit Scholarship test. He was very well-rounded in his abilities and his scores indicated that he had the ability to succeed in whatever career he chose to pursue. Although this should have been regarded as a blessing, Steve bemoaned the fact, saying that it made it all the more difficult to make a decision about what field to go into for his profession.

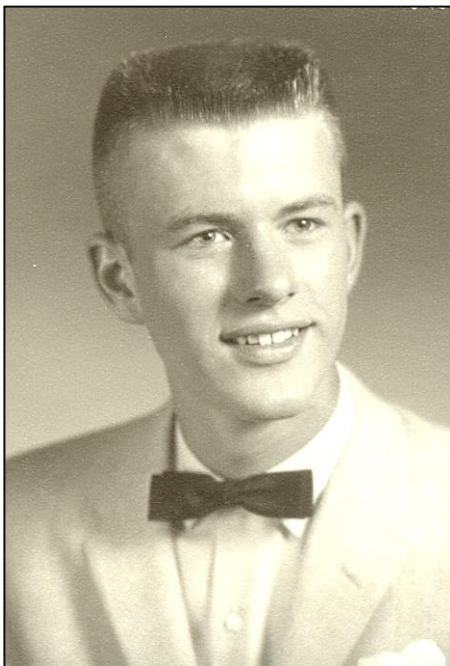
Some of the pictures of Steve's high school years show a '58 Chevrolet that he drove to school. It had the big fins and was a popular car in its day. He once told me that his way of getting "psyched up" for a date was to thoroughly clean his car

from top to bottom. That “car cleaning” gene was inherited from his mother who loved a clean car. It was one of those wonderful traits that I loved about Steve!

On July 9, 1961, prior to his senior year, Steve received his patriarchal blessing from the Blackfoot Stake patriarch, George S. Brower. It follows:

Brother Stephen Allan Larsen, by virtue of the Holy Priesthood and as the Patriarch in the Blackfoot Stake, I lay my hands upon your head and give unto you a Patriarchal Blessing that will be a guide to your footsteps as you journey through life and a comfort to you in all of the responsibilities that you will be confronted with.

At this time Brother Larsen, I give unto thee thy lineage which is of the blood of Israel through the loins of Ephraim. Through this heritage you are entitled to leadership in the Church and Kingdom of God. If you so order your life, the day will come when you will be prompted and guided to accept the responsibilities that will increase your testimony and give you the knowledge and understanding that is necessary for missionary service in His kingdom.



Brother Larsen, you were present when the plan of life and salvation was laid and were one of the valiant spirits who requested the responsibilities of coming to this earth in these the latter days to help spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to assist others as you do yourself in returning back to the presence of your Father in Heaven. Your Father is pleased with you and the activities thus far that you have rendered in His service. The day will come Brother Larsen when you will have the opportunity of sitting in council in the leadership of this Church and you will see the day when your name will be held in esteem in those councils because of your wisdom, your kindness, and the consideration that you give in the affairs of your Father.

Always be kind and considerate to your Father and Mother and the day will come when you will recognize the joy that comes to those who accept the counsel and advice from their parents. Labor diligently, train yourself in your youth to be willing to give all of your time and talents for the upbuilding of the kingdom of your Father and the blessings of the Lord will come to you because of the stalwart character which you will attain. You



will have the privilege and blessing of receiving all of the blessings of the Priesthood, particularly that you can go to the Temple of your Father and there receive the covenants and commandments that are necessary for your salvation and you will have the opportunity of being sealed to one of the choice daughters of Israel in the holy bonds of matrimony and becoming a Father in Zion. Through your example and your adherence to the commandments of your Father in Heaven the Lord will shower blessings down upon you to which you will sometimes feel that you cannot contain.

Now seek the Lord in humble prayer and go before him on your bended knees and pray always that you may be guided, prompted and tutored by the spirit of the Holy Ghost in order that you might fulfill each and every promise that may be given unto you.

To this end I bless you and seal upon you every blessing for your good and benefit together with all of the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through your faithfulness and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen (signed, Geo. S. Brower)

OFF TO COLLEGE

Steve enrolled at Ricks College (BYU-Idaho) in the fall of '62. He appreciated his father allowing him to leave at the harvest time of year when the demands on the farm were especially high and his father surely could have used his help. Although both Allan and Barbara did not have the opportunity to attend much college, they were both very supportive of their children earning college degrees and made every effort to encourage and support them in this.



Steve enjoyed college life and although he was majoring in zoology he also played the trumpet in the Ricks College Symphony Orchestra directed by the renowned LaMar Barrus. His mother's untiring efforts to encourage the development of his talent enabled him to feel confident in his abilities even at the college level. He performed in "The Messiah" his sophomore year with the orchestra and has had a life-long love of that music ever

since. He also played the trumpet in the orchestra for the operas, "La Boheme" and "Carmen".

It was during his first semester away from home that his testimony and commitment to the gospel were put to the test. He became involved



with a freshman girl and the two of them soon began dating exclusively. Their attraction for one another grew and soon Steve realized that he was at a crossroads. If he continued down the road he was on, he would forfeit his opportunity for a mission and temple marriage, two blessings that had long been the desire of his heart.

So, when college dismissed for the Christmas break, Steve returned home, talked things over with his parents, and approached his bishop, Marvin Wray, about his desire to serve a mission. Following a busy holiday season of getting all the paper work done and other details taken care of, he returned to Rexburg to finish out the semester (fall semester ran until the third week of January in those days).

CALLED TO SERVE

He was thrilled to receive his mission call to the Central British Mission signed by President David O. McKay. He was to report to the Mission Home in Salt Lake City on March 11, 1963. Prior to leaving for his mission he received his own endowments in the Idaho Falls Temple on March 7th. He was set apart as a missionary on March 13th by William J. Critchlow, Jr. and after a week of training he departed SLC at 2:25 a.m. on March 19. He flew by way of Minneapolis and arrived in New York at 4:02 p.m. that same day. He left three hours later from the New York International Airport on the Sabena Belgian World Airlines for London.

He often said that he had the best of both worlds: he got to go to a foreign country but didn't have to learn a new language. Steve loved his mission and thoroughly enjoyed becoming

acquainted with the British culture and people. He often joked about the commonly quoted description of the British: "2000 years of tradition, unmarred by progress!" He took advantage of his preparation days to tour the beautiful countryside and familiarize himself with places that he had previously only read about in



books or seen on television. Among the sites he visited were Stratford upon Avon, President McKay's birthplace, LDS Church History sites, and Buckingham Palace.

Some of the areas he served in were Peterborough, Bletchley Bucks, Hereford, Wales, Redditch, Gor'eston, and Cardiff. Many of the names of towns and areas were difficult to pronounce but Steve prided himself on being able to "wrap his tongue" around even the most

difficult titles and names. When he served in Wales he said that many of the native dwellings were considerably shorter than his 6'4" frame and he would have to stoop to enter the doorways. He created quite a stir among the Welch people.

Steve was easy to get along with and for the most part enjoyed his companions. He did confide once to me that one of his companions had riled him so badly that they almost came to blows! Living with another person as closely and completely as he did in his missionary companionships demanded a lot of patience and good will. Fortunately Steve had an abundance of these two characteristics. He particularly

relished the time he spent as a companion to Elder Dean P. Vernon, a missionary from Pocatello, Idaho. Their friendship continued for years after their time in England was over.

When Steve first arrived in England in March of 1963, the mission president was James A. Cullimore, but by August of that year he had been released and Joy F. Dunyon became the new president. Steve felt a great fondness for him and his wife and felt that they really went out of their way to encourage him and help him have a positive experience.

Steve became a district and eventually a zone leader. He spent a lot of time riding a bike and had his share of accidents, one time hitting the back of a car and flying over the handlebars of his bike and onto the trunk of the car. Fortunately he was only bruised and not seriously hurt.

He was one of only a handful of missionaries who was licensed to drive a car in the Central British Mission. Few could pass the very demanding driving test required. This pleased him and was a badge of honor among the other missionaries. Following are some of the comments of his instructor on his *"Progress Report on Driving Tuition"*: *The candidate displayed good mechanical handling coupled with accurate road procedure. This was, however, spoilt by his lack of observation and disregard for two Halt signs.....One further hour of instruction together with one hour immediately prior to the test, has been recommended, and accepted by the candidate. Dated 26.2.64 (February 26, 1964)*

His mission was full of the ups and downs that most missionaries experience. He spent a lot of time tracting door-to-door and often came up against those who didn't value his message. The sting of rejection was a daily challenge, but he learned to deal with these situations and continued searching for the "honest in heart".

Among Steve's mission memorabilia were two notes from investigators that are revelatory of the opposition he faced.

Steve had outlined for an investigator the steps of prayer and at the end of the note had written, *"Don't forget to Kneel."* Here is the response that was tacked to the door for him to read when he made a return visit: *What has kneeling to do with it. If I were crippled, I couldn't kneel, could I? What difference does it make! Thank you for letting me read the book, but I do not believe it adds anything to the bible, and I fail to see the significance of it. You could all do better with your time, doing constructive work in the cause of peace, so necessary in this world of evil with the threat of destruction by nuclear war hanging over our heads. Your book contributes nothing to the society, and as for being a supplement to the bible, helping us to believe, I think that is either an insult to the bible and peoples' faith. Don't you? I'm sorry I can't be home, but I have a lot of work to do at college. I have exams coming up and would be grateful if you would drop this whole matter. As to me it is more of a hindrance than help. (signed)*

Dear Sirs,

Your Mr. Parks and Mr. Larsen called on us on Sunday last and are due to call again at 7:30 on Thursday next 5.9.63. However, after reading the pamphlet which they left for us and discussing this with my wife, I would like to cancel the appointment. My family and I are all Church of England and are happy in our beliefs. I do not, therefore, feel a need to read "The Book of Mormon." Please contact Mr. Parks and Mr. Larsen and let them know this to save them having a wasted journey on Thursday or any future occasion. I do not intend being at home on Thursday evening as I do not want an unpleasant scene. I will leave a letter explaining my absence on the door but trust that you will

Men with a mission



understand my feelings and let Mr. Parks and Mr. Larsen know beforehand. (signed)

Part way through his time in England Steve's grandmother, Florence T. Larsen, made a special request of him. She had been doing genealogy and realized that Steve was serving in one of the areas where some of her ancestors had once lived. She asked him if he would consider trying to locate some names or contacts for her. He agreed to this and ran an ad in the local paper explaining his grandmother's requests:

Mrs. Florence T. Larsen, Firth, Idaho, U.S.A. would like to contact anyone having information regarding the parents or descendants of David Thomas and his wife Dorothea Walters, who were born and lived in or near Hereford City and who had a daughter, Elizabeth, who was born at St. Margarets, Herefordshire in April, 1810. She married William James and emigrated to U.S.A. in about 1865. Her husband died in Hereford.

Please send reply to Stephen A. Larsen, 98, Ryelands Street, Hereford, Herefordshire.

As a result of this he and Elder Vernon were featured in a daily newspaper, picture and all, with the following article:

Stephen A. Larsen, an American from Blackfoot, Idaho, is in Hereford on a dual mission. Objective No. 1 is to gain converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for which 20 year old Stephen is at present engaged on missionary work in Britain.

Objective No. 2 is to trace details of some of his grandmother's long dead relatives—who were natives of Herefordshire—so he can build up a family tree. Working with Stephen is another American Mormon, Dean P. Vernon, who is also 20, of Pocatello, Idaho. Both are Elders of their church, a title given to all missionaries.

Stephen has been in Britain for 10 months and before coming to Hereford worked in Great Yarmouth, Gor'eston, Stafford and Redditch. Dean has been in this country for two months and Hereford is his first missionary area. They are two of 1,100 such missionaries in the British Isles and there are 12,000 throughout the world. Formed by Joseph Smith in New York in the 1830 the Mormons have sent missionaries to Great Britain since 1836. American missionaries serve for two years abroad and then return to the USA to resume their work or schooling. They have to provide the finances for their overseas visits. When Dean goes home he will continue the law studies he was undertaking at Columbia University, New York, and Stephen hopes to make medicine his career.

Dean and Stephen told the Evening News their church has been "proselyting" (seeking converts) in Hereford for about three years and that to date membership in the area is about 60.

There are over two million Mormons throughout the world and the church's influence in this country seems to be increasing. Dean said, "On average we are building about one chapel a week."

One of the special things that Steve was able to do prior to returning home at the end of his mission was to take a short side trip and spend a few hours with his brother, Gary, who was serving as a missionary in Scotland! That was a sweet experience for both of them.

Two of the people that Steve baptized while serving in the British Isles were Gordon and Anne Dawe. A few years after Steve returned, the Dawes decided to immigrate and eventually moved to Provo, Utah where Gordon enrolled at BYU. At that time they had two little boys and since Steve and I were living in Provo while Steve worked on his degree, we became fast friends. They went on to have a total of nine children and to establish an electrical business in Utah Valley. For many years after Steve graduated from BYU we continued to keep in touch through Christmas cards and an occasional visit.

Another person he baptized, Christopher Sexton, made contact with him in 1989. Steve received a request from Church headquarters informing him that Christopher Sexton of England was trying to locate him and the address at which Christopher could be reached. Steve immediately wrote him and since then they have exchanged Christmas



greetings each year with updates of their family's "doings". Both of these families and their continuing involvement in the Church were a source of joy to Steve and a wonderful reminder of his success as a young, devoted missionary!

While Steve was serving in England he dislocated his shoulder. The first time that it

happened it was so painful that he nearly passed out. It was extremely painful to have it rotated back into place. The attending doctor braced himself against Steve's body, pulled hard on the end of the arm, and then twisted it so the end of the large bone of the arm slipped back into the rotator cuff of the shoulder.

Once he injured it, the ligaments and tendons were weakened and if he moved his arm just wrong, it would dislocate it again. It happened a couple of other times on his mission and later became an all-too-common occurrence, especially when he was playing basketball.

He became so accustomed to it that he even learned how to get it rotated back into place without the assistance of a doctor. He would lie on his stomach on the edge of the stage in the

church gym with his shoulder hanging down off the edge of the stage. He grasped something heavy or would have someone pull downward on his hand until the muscles released and the bone moved back into place.



Finally his doctor warned him that if he continued to injure it, he would need surgery on his shoulder (a procedure that was often unsuccessful). This prospect was frightening enough that he quit playing basketball except for an occasional game with his sons. Eventually he took up biking as his “personal favorite” sport and the weakened shoulder was never an issue again.

After serving a successful mission Steve was officially released on March 30, 1965, and flew home from London through New York City and then to Salt Lake City. He spent the next couple of months working with his Dad on the farm and looking ahead to attending Ricks College. Little did he realize that his life was about to take an unexpected turn and that marriage would soon be on the horizon.

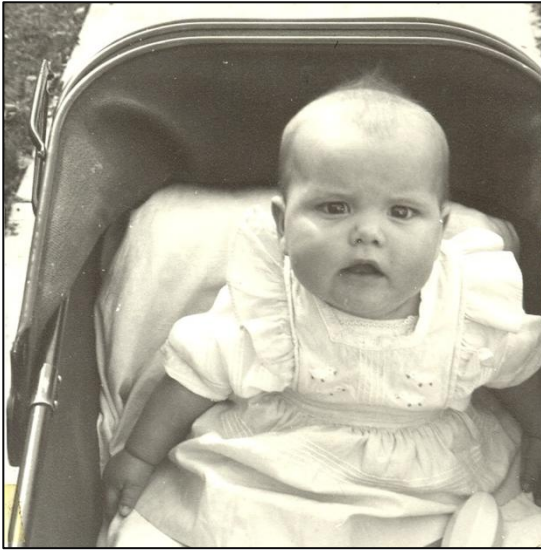
SECTION II: SUSAN RICHARDS – AUTOBIOGRAPHY



I was born on November 12, 1945, in Salt Lake City, Utah, the second child of Archibald Wilson Richards and Ilene Robinson Richards. My father was born on July 6, 1918, in Almo, Idaho, and my mother was born in Pocatello, Idaho, on January 29, 1922. They met while attending Utah State University in Logan, Utah, and were married May 5, 1943, in the Salt Lake Temple. Their union was

blessed with six children. They are: Kathleen (Stanley Richard Bennion), Susan (Stephen Allan Larsen), Nathan John (Maurine Allsop), Charles Arch (Brenda Zirker), Deniece (Don Wesley Cheney), and Lisa (Donald Marc Bricker).

I was blessed by my paternal grandfather, John C. Richards, on January 6, 1946, in West Jordan, Utah, and baptized and confirmed by my father



on November 29, 1953, in a swimming pool in Spearfish, South Dakota. At that time my family attended the Belle Fourche, South Dakota Branch of the West Central States Mission and there was neither a ward nor stake LDS building in the area in which the baptism could be performed.

Shortly after I was born my father began working for the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company as a research agronomist. He had put himself through college and received his Bachelor's Degree in Agronomy from Utah State University. His commitment to education was obvious throughout his life and he was proud that his research over the years helped improve the sugar beet industry throughout the West.

He was well-suited to his occupation because he was very thorough and precise in all he did. Some of my early childhood memories were of his frustrations with me when he helped me with my math assignments. He very meticulously showed the steps by which the answer was obtained while I just wanted to hurry through and get it done. He firmly believed that "anything

worth doing is worth doing well." I put speed ahead of accuracy (to his dismay). He often took me to task for doing things "slipshod."

His attention to detail was one of his trademarks

throughout his life. Even his penmanship reflected this penchant. When writing, he placed a ruler on the line and wrote against that straight edge. Then, when the line was completed, he removed the ruler and filled in the rest of the letter that fell below the line such as with g's, j's, p's, and q's. His friends and associates as well as his family could easily recognize his "hand" and often commented favorably on it.

Although my Dad was by nature serious-minded and precise, my mother was cheerful and light-



hearted. She made friends easily and was popular with young and old alike. She was animated, kind, funny, and lacking in pretense. She was approachable and loving, frequently being "the Advocate" for us children when Dad's stern ways were an obstacle to communication. I always thought I had "the best of both worlds" in my parents.

During his early years with the U & I Sugar Company Daddy was transferred often and my earliest memories were of our frequent moves. We moved from Brigham City, Utah to Chinook,

Montana to Glasgow, Montana to Enterprise, Utah to St. George, Utah to Belle Fourche, South Dakota to Aladdin, Wyoming and then to Shelley, Idaho where our family lived until after I graduated from high school. These moves were hard on my mother but exciting for me. I felt fortunate to get to see so many places and meet so many new people.

Working in management for the sugar company Daddy often had responsibilities supervising the transient laborers who came to thin, hoe, and harvest the sugar beets. In the days before the invention of the beet harvester, the beets were harvested manually by using a hand-held foot-long beet knife. It had a handle and a leather wrist strap, and a large hook at the tip of the two-inch-wide blade. The worker straddled the row, hooked the top of the beet, pulled it out of the ground and up into the other



hand. Then with one strong slice, the blade removed the crown of the beet and all the leaves. It was back-breaking work.

The company provided housing for these laborers since the work was seasonal and they moved on to other areas once the job was completed. In Enterprise, Utah, the company maintained several two and three-story buildings with

apartments. The laborers felt very little responsibility to maintain them so they were usually dirty and run down. Most of the workers came from tough backgrounds and often fights and problems erupted among them, even resulting in deaths on occasion.

After one such incident my father was given the assignment to address the problems with the workers, a group of large, black Jamaicans. My mother accompanied him this particular time and sat in the car as Daddy got out of the car and walked out into the field where the men were working. He needed to talk through with them some of the offenses that had been reported and get their commitment to maintain law and order while they lived in company housing.

Mother later related that as Dad approached some of the men, many others started to gather around, each wielding a beet knife. They formed a circle around him, and Mother, watching from the car, felt helpless to assist. She watched as the conversation progressed and at one point she felt that the mantle of the Priesthood fell upon Daddy and that it formed a protective shield for him. She knew the Lord was watching over him. He addressed the issues and asked for their cooperation in getting the crop out without any further altercations and violence.





When he finished and got back into the car, Daddy admitted to Mom that the air was so charged with anger that as he

turned to walk toward the car, he would not have been surprised to have had someone sink a beet knife into his back. Although this encounter had been frightening, with continued interaction Daddy gained the cooperation of these workers because of his obvious courage and his philosophy of treating them with respect and fairness.

Another incident had to do with that same labor camp. Daddy took me with him for a ride to the camp and since it was summer, we had the windows of our car rolled down. I was fascinated by all the children and activity I saw in the camp and was kneeling on the seat by the passenger-side window with my arm hanging out. (This was in the day before infant and toddler car seats!) All at once my Dad yelled, "Susan, get your arm in the car!" I quickly responded and in that moment a large German shepherd dog lunged for the car window and my arm. Had I not responded, he would have latched onto my arm and I could have been maimed for life. How grateful I am that I had learned obedience and didn't ask, "Why" before responding to my father's command.



In Enterprise we lived in a housing unit that had been old army barracks. The walls between the units were thin and we could easily hear what was going on next door. Even as a small child

this lack of privacy between neighbors annoyed me, but taught me that all families did not enjoy the peace and tranquility that I felt in our home.

The winters in Enterprise were usually very severe, much to mother's dismay. I remember Daddy showing us an icicle that reached from the eaves of our apartment to the ground. After living in Enterprise for a while my parents accepted a calling to be temple workers in the St. George Temple, an assignment they grew to love.

While we lived in these housing units my little brother Nathan who was about three years old started having nightmares. He dreamed that a big bear was going to eat him. My parents talked these dreams through with him and Daddy gave him a priesthood blessing. The next time Nathan started into one of those dreams he said that he just said to the bear, "I'm not afraid of you. You are just a dream!" and the bear never bothered him again.



The rows of apartments in the housing units were so close together that there were a lot of young families and my siblings and I had lots of other children to play with. But, because it was low-income housing, many of the residents were rather

unsavory and my parents seemed grateful when a transfer came to St. George, Utah. They were especially pleased that they would be able to continue working in the temple.

It was during this time that they wanted to have another baby, but the doctors told them it was highly unlikely since Daddy had become sterile. Daddy told President Snow (of the temple presidency) of his problem and a special prayer was offered for him in the temple by the officiators. A few months later they were overjoyed when Mom became pregnant with my little brother, Charles.

My memories of St. George include playing in a vineyard with neighborhood children. We would lie in the warm sand under the thick vines, playing house and hide-and-seek. It was in St. George that I started kindergarten. When Daddy received word that we were going to be transferred to Belle Fourche, South Dakota, Mom wasn't as thrilled as the rest of us were. We thought it sounded like a great adventure and we were right!

BELLE FOURCHE, SOUTH DAKOTA

Until our move to Belle Fourche, we had lived in Mormon communities and so being in the "mission field" was a new experience. Because there were very few members in the area, we belonged to a small branch instead of an established ward and the meetings were held in the back room of the local library. On Sundays, following Sunday School, the members went to a



nearby park for lunch and then stayed for sacrament meeting that afternoon rather than traveling home and then returning since some of the members lived long distances away. This weekly outing helped the members of the branch develop close friendships with one another.

I remember the day my mother went into the hospital to deliver my younger brother, Charles. It

seemed like Daddy was gone forever and when he did return following Charles' birth, he was

subdued and tired. He was gravely concerned for Mom since she had had such a difficult time. This had been her plight during all her deliveries; they seemed to exact a high toll on her health and stamina. I

remember being touched by my father's comment that "she walked through

the valley of the shadow of death" each time she gave birth. This left a deep impression on my young mind and gave added understanding to how precious each of us children was to our parents.

Later Mom told me that the delivery of her first child had been a 30+ hour ordeal. It was so hard on both her and the baby that when Kathy was born, she was black from the trauma. Mom said that when they wheeled her into recovery, the doctor was unable to locate Daddy. Finally they found him in an empty room, crying with relief that the ordeal was over.

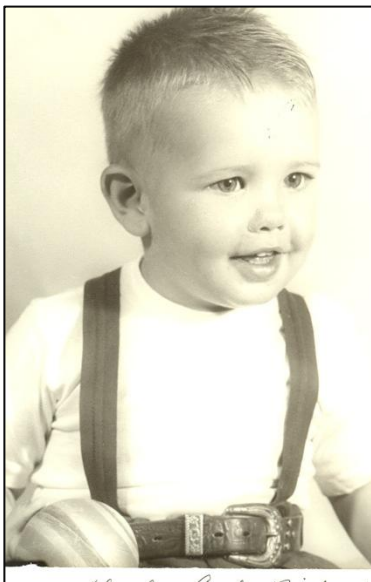
Living in the mission field put us in constant touch with the young Elders who were



missionaries in our area. They often dropped in for meals and borrowed various household items. My siblings and I loved having them around.

My dad always had a fascination with cars and he taught my younger brother Nathan all the makes and models. Even at the age of four, Nathan could easily identify almost any car on the road. One time we traveled from South Dakota to Utah in the back seat of our two-door sedan. Mom and Dad placed a feather tick (mattress made of feathers) in the back seat on the floor so that it formed a play area for us during the long trip. This was fine for a while but my propensity towards car sickness kept me sitting erect, watching the road most of the time.

While in Belle Fourche my father was called to serve in the Branch Presidency and then he was called as District President. As a family, we accompanied him on his Sunday visits to branches in Spearfish, Deadwood, and Lead. While attending the Belle Fourche Branch I bore my first testimony. I was sitting in the meeting and I had such a strong desire to get up that all at



once I was on my feet. Part way through my testimony my fear got the best of me and I started to cry but somehow I managed to finish. (That was the first of many teary-eyed times in testimony



meetings over the course of my life.)

During our time in Belle Fourche the polio scare seemed to be at its height. My mother was so concerned that one of us children would get it that she made sure we took an afternoon nap each day. My cousin, Doreen Richards, was stricken and was crippled for the rest of her life. The "iron lung" (the large metal cylinder that encased polio victims and helped them breathe) was the dread of every child and was motivation for us to do our part to stay healthy.

One of the few memories I have of our time in Belle was of my Dad teaching me to ride a bike. He and Mom decided to get us kids a bike and Daddy was the one who bought it. When he got home, much to our delight, we discovered that he hadn't bought just any bike. It was black and white and looked like it was wearing chaps and even had two holsters and guns hanging from the handle bars. It had fringe on the hand grips and on the rack over the back tire. It was definitely a super-deluxe model!

I was excited to get to learn to ride it. After a few tries, all ending in painful spills, I began to wonder if I would ever learn to keep it upright. It seemed that doing so defied all the rules of gravity that I was aware of. But Daddy persisted

and soon I was zooming around the neighborhood having the time of my life.

LIFE ON THE RANCH IN ALADDIN, WYOMING

Shortly after moving to Belle, my father and three of his brothers, Jay, Delos, and Warren, purchased an 860 acre cattle ranch near Aladdin, Wyoming. My father had been raised on a small farm and although he would have liked to farm for a living, he knew that his father's acreage wasn't large enough for any of the sons to make a living on. Dad chose another career, but he never got over his desire to have his own place. Buying the ranch was a dream-come-true for him.

The ranch was a 25 mile drive from Belle Fourche and was nestled in a beautiful, wooded valley in the Black Hills known as the Black Rock Area. It had two houses, numerous barns, corrals, outbuildings, and granaries. Our family lived in the larger of the two homes and Uncle Warren's family lived in the other one. My dad drove back and forth each day to work at the sugar factory in Belle Fourche and Uncle Warren worked the ranch. We grew hay and grain (dry farmed) and raised a herd of Hereford cattle.

(Personal history of Ilene Richards) The winter we lived there proved something to a lot of us. So many living out there never considered leaving the house after the snow began to fall. Arch had to report to work in Belle Fourche every morning—rain or shine. So down the road he'd go through snow and all every day. One old-timer told us it wasn't until they saw Arch traveling down the highway every morning that they realized they weren't snowed in. From that time on winter wasn't a shut-in time for them.

Although life on the ranch held excitement and charm for us children, it was difficult for my mother. There was no electricity because the ranch was so far from the main roads. When



Daddy came home each evening from work, he started up a large generator which provided us with power. Our phone was a rectangular wooden box that hung on the wall with a stationary mouthpiece and a receiver that hung on a metal clamp on the side. All the neighbors were on the same telephone "exchange" and could pick up the phone and hear someone else's conversation; a real hindrance to privacy.

Because the ranch was in such a remote location, shopping trips were rare and many times we ordered our clothes and supplies from a catalog. It was always exciting when our order would arrive in the mail.

One had to leave the paved highway and travel several miles on dirt roads to get to the ranch. These roads became my mother's nemesis. In the spring they were muddy; in the summer, dusty; and in the winter, nearly impassable. Each ranch along the road had its own fences, cattle guards, and gates that had to be opened and shut before continuing on. It appeared to me that leaving a gate open was tantamount to treason and may have even carried the same penalty. Mother knew this and so closing gates was part and parcel of traveling anywhere.

One day Mom and Aunt Merle (who was just a few days away from having a baby) were coming home from the Aladdin store and somehow they

rolled the jeep on its side about a mile from the ranch house. Neither of them could get the jeep doors to open so they climbed out the windows and walked home to get help.

During the summer recess from school, our contact with our neighbors came when we visited the general mercantile store in Aladdin. It sold groceries, fabric, machinery parts, horse tack, and other assorted items. It was a gathering place for the local ranchers and it seemed that everyone was on a first-name basis. This gave us a sense of community despite the remoteness of the individual ranches.

Wildlife was abundant and many were the times we spotted deer, porcupines, badgers, and raccoons. When Daddy was with us and we saw a porcupine, he would chase it down and then club it to death. The porcupines could make short work of a tree by eating the bark around the trunk, leaving it exposed to disease and weather. One time Daddy brought some quills home after one such episode and I inadvertently sat on one and had its barbed quill hook into my thigh. After a few tears were shed, Daddy carefully cut it out with the tip of his pocket knife and I was as good as new.

The days were full of adventure as we roamed and explored caves in the nearby hills and caught and caged baby rabbits during haying season.



This area had been traversed by General Custer's army and one time we discovered a cave with horse skeletons, writing on the walls, and Indian arrowheads. We collected some of these and took them to the Wild West Museum in Spearfish, Wyoming to confirm their authenticity.

Branding time was a community event as neighbors gathered and pooled manpower. My siblings and I sat on the corral fences and watch the cowboys wrestle the calves to the ground and apply the searing iron.

Christmas brought an opportunity to hunt for just the right tree. Mom and Aunt Merle took off one afternoon with an ax in hand and arrived back at the ranch hours later dragging a beautiful Ponderosa pine tree. When it was put upright, it was a surprising 15 feet tall and much too big for either families' living room. We all had a good laugh over that!

On Sunday we made the trip to Belle Fourche and attended our church meetings. Sometimes friends from Belle Fourche visited us on the ranch. Each Sunday evening the LDS missionaries joined us for a wiener roast. My parents made friends wherever we lived and they were an integral part of the branch in Belle Fourche, bringing much-needed spiritual maturity to it and the other struggling branches in Lead,

Deadwood, and Spearfish.

One evening, following a get-together, my Dad told Kathy and me to take a large dishpan full of water melon rinds outside and dump them into the corral for the chickens and bulls to eat. It was pitch black outside and the thought of going out into the darkness filled me with terror. Nevertheless, Kathy and I, each

holding a side of the large pan, proceeded to make our way across the yard. Just a few steps from the corral, we heard a rustling sound and turned to see several sets of shining eyes hovering in the darkness. Kathy dropped her side of the pan and took off in a dead run for the house. I wasn't far behind. When we tried to explain to Dad what had happened, he looked very serious and asked, "Did it whistle?"

"Yes, Yes," we said excitedly! Then he leaned back and laughed. "Must have been some whistling raccoons," he said. He told that story every chance he got and never let us live it down. But, in our defense, I must say that the following morning we inspected the fence, and in the daylight we saw tracks on the ground and claw marks on the fence where we had seen the glowing eyes.

We children were not the only ones with fears. Mother had her share. She disliked the constant opening and closing of gates as she drove us to school. One road went right through the barnyard of our closest neighbors, the Bunnies. Inevitably, when we approached their large wooden gate, their humongous Hereford bull would be standing in front of it waiting for us. Mother honked, yelled, waved her arms, and did almost anything to convince him to move, short of getting out of the jeep; but usually to no avail. On such occasions, we all knew that the solution was Nathan. He was my fearless little five-year-old brother. He climbed out of the jeep and prodded the bull with a switch until it sauntered out of the way and the gate could be opened.

Our own bulls, George and Elmer, were no less a challenge. When they were kept in the corral, they loved to lie in the shade in front of the chicken coop door. This usually wasn't a problem unless one of us was in the coop collecting eggs or feeding the chickens. One morning before leaving for school, Kathy and I got trapped in the coop and all our yelling didn't

move the bull or alert Mother. After a while she missed us and realized that we were in the coop waiting to be rescued. Soon Nate was sent out with a small switch and he drove the bull from his resting place.

Because of the distance to Belle Fourche, we attended a one-room school house near Aladdin. Mother drove Kathy and me to the Bunnies and we rode horses with them the rest of the way to school. The school building was the classic "one-room school house" of pioneer times with a pot-bellied stove in the center for heat. Desks were clustered around it. By the front door was a large bucket of drinking water with each student's own dipper hanging on a nail. There was a community wash basin on a table and an area for firewood. The bathroom facilities consisted of an outhouse a few yards behind the school and there was a stable where the horses were kept during the school day. We had no telephone or electricity.

There were eight students the year Kathy and I attended, two of whom were the teacher's twins. Erma drove a jeep to school, wore Levis and cowboy boots, and lived at a nearby ranch. I doubt she was a certified teacher, but that made little difference. We had a building and a teacher and that was good enough. There were eight grades represented by the students, each year the composition of the student body changing. When students reached the ninth grade, they lived in a boarding house in Belle Fourche and attended school there.

I was the only first grader the year I attended. This was wonderful because I could progress as quickly as I wanted to. As I completed each assignment, Erma would let me move on to something more challenging. I learned multiplication, division, and to write cursive by the time I finished the first grade. When we transferred back to a school in Belle Fourche the

next year, I was so far ahead of the other second graders that school was a real drag.

My sister, Kathy, was one of three third graders, the other two being Erma's twins. Kathy was a "bleeder" and would sometimes get a bad bloody nose. When this would happen, Erma drove her to the nearest ranch to get help and left the rest of us to fend for ourselves. We shared the playground at school with a herd of Hereford cattle and sometimes during the lunch hour we explored the nearby hills. One time we discovered a plane that had crashed in the mountains. We enjoyed playing baseball, catch-the-flag, and other games. Although Kathy and I were the "new kids on the block" and from a different background than most of the students, we got along well and thoroughly enjoyed our unique school situation.

One day Erma informed us that we were going to join with the Aladdin School in presenting a Christmas program. Aladdin was a bigger school and we didn't feel comfortable associating with them so none of us was very excited about it. Reluctantly we rode in Erma's jeep to the first rehearsal. Following the rehearsal, as we were getting ready to leave, the boys from the Aladdin School started throwing cow pies at us. Erma tried to stop the fight before it got out of hand but then she got hit with a stray piece and that pulled her into the fray. We were a stinky group as we returned that day from our practice.



Occasionally Kathy and I waited at our neighbor's house, the Bunnies, until Mom came for us after school. I had never seen anyone live like they did. Everything was a real mess and occasionally a pig or chicken walked into their living room from the barnyard and stayed awhile. The kitchen was piled high with dirty dishes and it was nearly impossible to find a clean one upon which to eat. I think some of the residents of that area had so little contact with the outside world that they didn't see any need to keep up appearances. It always unnerved me to see this and I was grateful that my own family had a higher standard of cleanliness.

We lived on the ranch about a year, but because of financial problems and tensions between my Dad and Uncle Warren, the decision was made to move back to Belle Fourche. I hated to leave the ranch. I loved the beautiful hills, the sound of the wind in the pines, the sense of community with the other ranchers, and all the adventures we had from day to day.

It was during this time that I learned an important lesson about priorities. Rather than have hurt feelings and problems in the family,

Daddy and Jay sold their shares to Warren. For many years I resented that we had let the ranch go but my parents showed by example the importance of keeping family relationships sweet.

Over 40 years later, on a trip to the Midwest, we went through the Black Hills. I wanted to see the ranch, the site of so many of my sweetest childhood memories. With a little effort we located Aladdin and the old mercantile store that I knew as a little girl. As I approached the clerk, I asked if she happened to remember a ranch that was up in those hills that was once owned by my father and his brothers. "Oh, the Richards' brothers? Sure, I remember them. They were here for just a few years and then sold out."

I was amazed that she could remember it so well. I inquired further and she said that the property had been purchased by one of the neighboring ranchers and that no one lived up in the hills anymore. The roads were no longer maintained. She offered to call the owners and see if we could drive to the old homestead but since we didn't have a four-wheel-drive vehicle, she didn't think we could make it.

I asked also about the one-room schoolhouse and she pointed to where it once stood. It had long ago been demolished and now the children were bused to schools in Belle Fourche.

Before leaving the Mercantile, I visited with an elderly gentleman who was sitting on the front porch of the store. He, too, remembered the Richards' brothers. He said that a person today could not buy a ranch in that area. The ranches were handed down from generation to

generation and their value ran into the millions of dollars.

Before we left, a pickup pulling a horse trailer stopped in front of the store and two cowboys got out and went inside for supplies. They looked like they had just stepped out of a western movie. For a moment my thoughts went back to my days on the ranch and I realized that if my family had stayed on the ranch, my upbringing would have been very different than what it had been. I would have been raised in the rough and tumble world of the cowboy and who knows what influence that would have had on me. My parents' decision had far-reaching

consequences in the lives of their posterity.



LIFE IN SHELLEY, IDAHO

Following our move from the ranch we lived back in Belle Fourche for a while longer and then we were transferred to Shelley, Idaho. My mother was very pleased with this because her mother, Abby Gooch, lived about a half an hour drive away in Blackfoot. My parents purchased a lovely red brick home in Shelley. My dad, who was an avid hunter, sold several of his guns and their good car to come up with the down payment.

We moved into our new home on December 23rd after staying with Grandma Gooch for a couple of weeks while the house was vacated and the sale was finalized. As usual, the Mayflower Moving and Storage Company moved us and we arrived at our new home to find all the packing boxes stacked in every room. As mother unpacked, we gathered the small identifying stickers on each item and stuck them all over our bodies. It was great fun!

Moving into our new home so close to Christmas, I was concerned that Santa wouldn't realize that we had moved, but somehow he did and despite our unsettled situation, Santa made his annual visit to our house. We had only been in the ward a week when my Dad was called to serve in the bishopric with Maurice Johnson, the new bishop. We quickly adjusted to living in "Zion" again and felt right at home. Our yard and home quickly became a gathering place for all the neighborhood children.



making in the basement at 3:00 that morning that I was "lucky" to get any gifts at all!

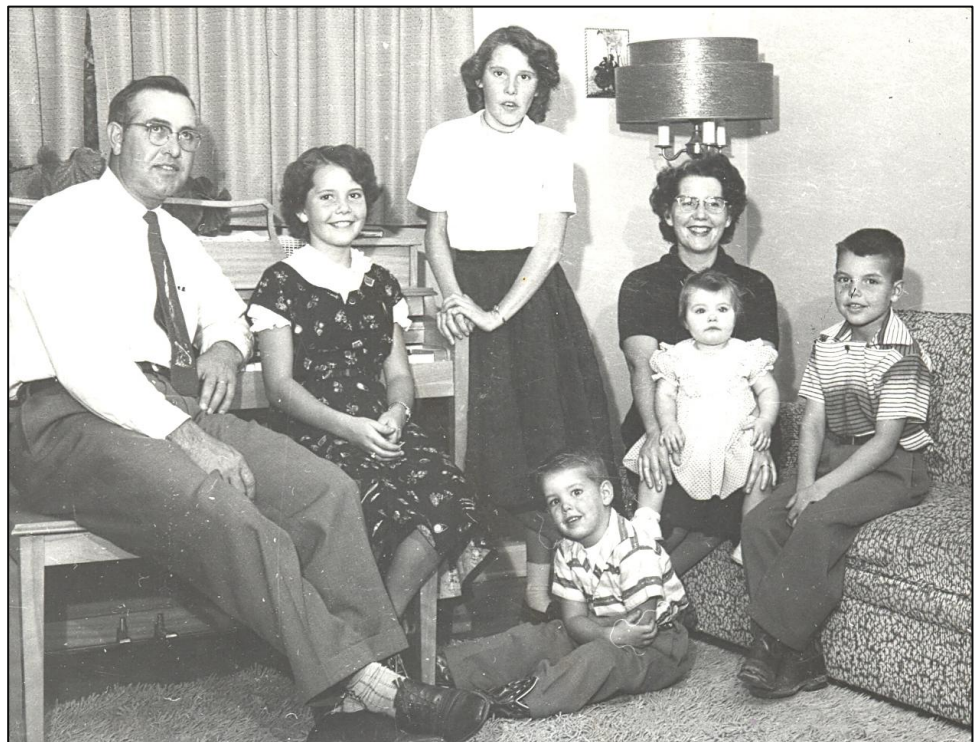
In Shelley we bought our first T.V. Each week we sat together as a family and watched the Laurence Welk Show. I really liked the singing groups but whenever someone played the piano, I felt guilty because I was taking piano lessons and I hated practicing. My teacher, Muriel Clark, told me that I had a lot of natural ability, but I thought that I had more important

things to do with my time and I convinced Mother to let me quit. That choice has been one that I have regretted all my life.

Many of my early memories of Shelley centered around Christmas. We always had a routine on Christmas morning. My parents had a rule that we couldn't get up and open our gifts until 5:30 a.m. Usually I was so excited that I was awake about 2:30 and could not get back to sleep. Soon my siblings and I would be gathered in one of our bedrooms talking quietly (and giggling) until the appointed hour arrived.

While we were living in Shelley my sister, Deniece, joined our family. She was born at four in the afternoon on New Year's Day and was the first baby born in Bingham County in '56 so Mom was given several gifts by the businesses in Blackfoot. Deniece had a beautiful head of curly

One Christmas we were noisier than usual and by the time 5:30 arrived, we had been awake and talking for several hours. That year Santa left me a large, black, stuffed poodle. I decided to name him "Lucky". Later that day my tired and blurry-eyed father commented that he was so frustrated with all the noise we were

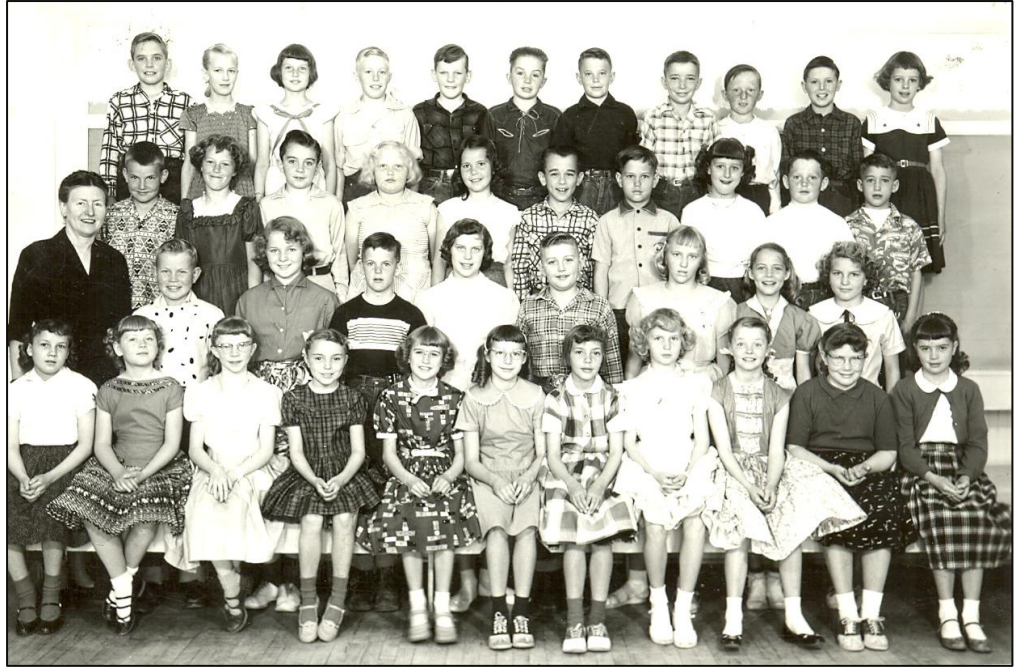


black hair and the sweetest little face; she brought a lot of joy into our home.

I have always had an ability to make friends easily and early in my life I had an experience that influenced me to use that gift in the Lord's service. When I was in fourth grade there was a boy in my class who was kind

of the class clown. He was from a disadvantaged situation, often poorly groomed, and his way of getting attention was to get into trouble. Most of us encouraged his antics and had some good laughs at his expense. One day as a joke, we nominated him for class president. That night I was telling my Dad about this and he called me to task.

"Well, Sis, you can be a part of that if you want to; but keep this in mind. I was like that boy when I was growing up. I didn't have much and during the Depression I even wore my older sister's shoes to school because I didn't have anything else to wear. A lot of the kids made fun of



me. It was pretty tough. Maybe you can make a difference in his life. Why don't you use your influence to turn this into a good experience for him?"

My Dad's words brought me up short and helped me realize how unkind we were being. The next day I talked to my classmates and helped them understand what my Dad had pointed out to me. When the elections were held a few days later, as a result of my campaigning, Sheridan won. It was interesting to see the change that came over





him. He settled down and quit causing trouble and many of us became good friends with him after that.

I have always appreciated my Dad's advice. He had a sensitivity that had been born of deprivation during the Great Depression and I felt that he nurtured a compassionate spirit in me that helped me better understand people's motives and needs.

I had always been very healthy and strong and even won my school class's arm wrestling contest at a field day in sixth grade. I had a step-cousin in Shelley who was a good friend and one time he challenged me to a wrestling match in my back yard after school. Much to his



surprise and my delight, I soon had him pinned. Before he left that day he made me promise that I wouldn't tell

anyone and I've kept that promise all these years.

GRANDPARENTS

One of the advantages of living in Shelley was that we lived only a half hours drive from my Grandma and Grandpa Gooch who lived in Blackfoot. My Grandma Gooch stood about five feet tall and seemed about as round as she was tall. If I was visiting overnight, in the morning as she dressed, she had me help her with her corset. I tugged and pulled on the shoestrings



that laced it up while she stood straight and “sucked it in” as much as possible. She had hair to her waist that she always wore in a long braid that she wound around her head with curls framing her face. She was very meticulous about her appearance as well as her home, yard and garden.

Grandpa Gooch had a small shop at the back of the property where he did woodworking. They kept a garden and Grandma always had flowers growing everywhere, including a beautiful climbing rose which covered a trellis arch, welcoming visitors to their yard.

Grandma had been born of polygamist parents in Colonia Diaz, Chihuahua, Mexico on January 22, 1888 and led a life of hardship and trials. Her personal history of over 200 pages chronicles her early life, her loves and losses, and her strong commitment to living the gospel. There was never any question in my mind that she knew the gospel was true and that she loved us and expected us to live its principles. She taught the Theology lesson in Relief Society for many years and was known for her strong testimony.

About twice a month on Sunday afternoon Mother drove to Grandma’s house for a visit and she insisted that we children go along. Sometimes I didn’t want to go since it was so boring, but I respected her wishes and went. Grandma usually had some rice krispie treats for us and we sat outside in the shade of the trees



while she and Mom visited.

Each Memorial Day we had a routine that never varied. Grandma saved her empty mayonnaise jars and put tin foil around them so that they looked nice. She went into her yard and gathered up flowers, especially the lilacs which were in bloom at that time of the year, and we arranged them in the jars. Then, with each of us

balancing several jars on our laps, Mom drove us to the Pocatello cemetery where we placed the floral arrangements on the graves of family members. It seemed like there were so many that Grandma was responsible for, each representing a sad time in her life.

The annual trip to the cemetery wasn’t my favorite outing, but as the years have passed, the tradition of decorating graves has grown in significance. It has been a reminder of the debt we owe those who have gone before and of the certainty of sorrow and loss in our lives.

Grandma had a card table set up in the corner of her living room and she enjoyed playing board games. When I visited her and spent a day or two, we inevitably played dominoes. She was an avid genealogist and historian and worked for many years gathering information about her

ancestors. Her tireless efforts left our family with records on the Johnson/Kendrick lines that go back to medieval times. Her work laid a foundation upon which my mother, Ilene Richards, continued to build.



Grandma's marriage to Joe Gooch took place when both of them were in their sixties. Grandma often shared with me some of her life's experiences and she told me of their courtship. She said that when she started dating him, she was determined not to fall in love since she had previously buried two husbands. One day she told Joe not to come back again. But, he continued to court her until she agreed to marry him. When I asked Grandpa why he ignored her instructions to not come back, he replied with a twinkle in his eye, "Her voice told me to go, but her eyes told me to stay!"

Joe was the only grandfather I had known since Grandma's second husband (my mother's father), Nathan O. Robinson, died of a heart attack on June 13, 1941 before I was born and my paternal grandfather, John C. Richards, died when I was four. Grandpa Gooch was very kind and loving and always tried to make me feel welcome. His passion was fishing and he spent many happy hours fishing the streams in the area. He had some electric probes that he used which made the night crawlers come up out of the grass and he caught them to use for bait. Grandma Gooch enjoyed going along with him on his fishing trips.

On one such trip I went along to keep Grandma Gooch company. It was the first time I had ever fished and I got more of an adventure than I bargained for.

After arriving at one of Grandpa's favorite fishing holes, we unpacked our gear and Grandpa Gooch set out to fish the stream about a quarter mile away. Grandma and I stood along the bank close to the car

and had very little luck. It was then that Grandma had the idea that if we could get across the stream, there were some small pools on the other side that she thought might be good fishing. There happened to be a fallen log that provided us with a natural bridge and I easily crossed over the log and onto the far bank of the stream. Grandma was not confident that she could cross the log standing up so she decided to straddle it and hop on her bottom until she arrived at the other bank. The stream was very swift and about five feet wide. As Grandma started across, the current caught her legs and she was swept under the log and downstream.

I watched this drama, standing terrified on the bank, and thinking that perhaps the last memory I would have of her was of her struggling in the water as she was swept away. Fortunately, she had enough presence of mind to grab onto some willow branches that were protruding out from the banks and she clung to them and yelled for me to go get Grandpa. I safely crossed back over the stream and ran as fast as I could to fetch Grandpa who was fishing downstream and didn't have a clue that Grandma was in the water.

At first, when he heard me yelling and saw me jumping up and down, he thought that I had



caught a big fish. But quickly he realized that something was wrong and came running. He got a large piece of driftwood and held it out to Grandma and she was able to take hold of it and hang on until we fished her out. She was wet from head to toe and so we wrapped her in a big blanket, gathered our gear, and left for home.

It was of interest to Grandpa that despite her wild ride in the swift stream, Grandma hadn't lost her eye glasses. When he mentioned this fact to her, she took him to task about being concerned about her eye glasses when she had barely escaped with her life! Anyway, we got her home safely and she was none the worse for wear. What could have been a very tragic experience turned into a story that always brought a good laugh.

In September of 1970 Grandpa Joe and his son-in-law, Swede Ostegar, were returning from a fishing trip when they were involved in an automobile accident. Swede was transported to the hospital and put in intensive care but died a few days later. Grandpa was put in the rest home in Blackfoot and languished there for over two months before he passed away the day after Thanksgiving of 1970. Because of Grandma's failing health she couldn't live alone and went to live with Aunt Ellafair in Nampa. She passed away on November 4, 1974, at the age of 86.

My paternal grandfather, John Charles Richards, died on March 29, 1950, when I was four. He was a farmer and carpenter and suffered a heart

attack while working on the farm with his big horses. He had hitched them up to some equipment and gone into a nearby field to work. Later Grandma saw the horses wandering around and realized that something was wrong. She found Grandpa a while later. I remember going to his viewing in the front room of the family house in West Jordan, Utah, and peeking over the rim of the coffin to see his body.

One of my only memories of him was when he brought some eggs from the coop into the kitchen for breakfast. Grandma broke them into the frying pan and one had a little hairy dead chick inside of it, which we quickly scooped out of the frying pan and threw away. I also vaguely remember him working with his horses. Even after he died, the horses remained a part of the farm and when I got older, my siblings and I would climb into the loft of the small barn and throw dirt down on their broad backs and watch them twitch until it had all rolled off.

My paternal grandmother was an important part of my life. While I was growing up in Shelley, we traveled to West Jordan, Utah, each Thanksgiving for the annual Richards' family reunion which was held at Grandma Richards's house on Redwood Road. Most of my Richards' aunts and uncles lived in the Salt Lake area and it was the tradition for many years to have our Thanksgiving dinner together. It was a wonderful time of seeing my cousins, playing games, visiting, and catching up on family news.

Since we had to travel several hours from our home in Idaho, we would arrive on Wednesday night and already be there on Thursday when the rest of the family arrived. It was always an exciting time! Everyone helped get the dinner on while the cousins set the tables. Long tables draped with white tablecloths and fancy china and silverware stretched throughout the living room and dining area. There was always plenty of delicious food! The party lasted all day and



even sometimes into the night as the older cousins stuck around to have some time together.

Occasionally we would get to spend the night with some of our cousins and once Daddy took us ice skating on the Bear River near Trenton where my Uncle Stu and Aunt Della lived. My Dad loved all kinds of sports and he was a great skater. We built a fire on the ice (don't ask me how) so that we could warm our fingers and toes occasionally, but then we would skate down the river with the ice just popping under our feet. I never understood how Daddy could be so sure we wouldn't go plunging into a crack, but we never did.

Visiting Grandma was like stepping back into pioneer times. She lived in a large house built by her grandfather, Archibald Gardner, in pioneer days. Grandma's mother, Mary Ann Gardner, died when Grandma was only 18 months old and so she was raised by an aunt and an uncle who never married and who lived in this house on Redwood Road. Archibald, her maternal grandfather, lived with them for a while and the house was eventually given to my Grandma. She raised her family there except for a few years when they homesteaded in southern Idaho.

Many of the furnishings in her home were antiques and each room held a certain fascination for me. The house had a large veranda on the front onto which both the living room and master bedroom opened. The ceilings were high as was the style in those days and the windows tall and narrow. There were three bedrooms, a bathroom with a free standing bathtub, a large living room and kitchen, and a separate dining room.

The kitchen had a row of cupboards that went to the ceiling. A small refrigerator stood against one wall and a wood-burning cook stove and wood box were against another. Other



furnishings in the spacious kitchen included a treadle sewing machine and a large, round pedestal oak table. There was a "lazy Susan" turn table on it onto which the food was placed and which facilitated passing the food when a large group dined. Attached to the kitchen was an enclosed porch where Grandma kept potted flowers and which served as a greenhouse, work room, and "mud room". Later when she started doing some oil painting, she used it as a place to keep her painting supplies and to display her art work.

In the living room was an upright piano with a small circular piano stool which spun around, enabling the user to have it adjusted to his particular height. I loved to sit on this and spin around until the chair had been put as high or low as it could go. There was a large, ornate mirror on the wall and a beautiful clock which chimed on the hour. The lights in the house were operated from pull cords which ran along the door frames or pulled from a cord hanging down from the bulb itself.

The bedrooms didn't have closets, but large wooden wardrobes which were free standing

and had drawers and a place to hang clothes. Grandma's beds were high off the ground and piled with feather ticks, which were mattresses stuffed with real feathers. She had two or three on each bed and they were always an adventure to sleep in! At night, she opened the screened windows to create a breeze and I went to sleep serenaded by the crickets that sang for hours in the warm summer nights.

The house was located on an acreage that had been farmed since the pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in the mid 1800's and included several outbuildings. There was an old wooden granary which reminded me of a building turned inside out because the 2x4 studs were on the outside of the building instead of being enclosed in the walls. There was a barn where Grandpa kept his large draft horses and a root cellar where bottled fruits and vegetables, bushels of apples, bags of potatoes, and other commodities were stored. The cellar had two large wooden doors which lay on the side of a large rounded mound of dirt. To get into the cellar, we opened the doors, laying them back against the dirt and descended several wooden stairs into the damp, cool darkness of the cellar. There were wooden shelves which lined the walls and a pleasing earthen smell; in the dimly lit interior, we saw mice scampering and sometimes felt creepy spider webs against our arms and face.

It was always fascinating to think about the role the root cellar played in helping Grandma and Grandpa feed their large family during Depression years. My father once told me that Grandma labeled the shelves and divided up the

commodities by months so that they stretched throughout the year. The family ate what they produced including vegetables, jams and jellies, wheat for bread, potatoes, carrots, fruit from trees and bushes, and even honey they harvested from a hive and then used to give them a start for vinegar. They had bacon and ham from their pigs, milk and meat from their cows, and eggs from their chickens. By doing this they were able to keep themselves fed even though other commodities which required cash were in short supply. Daddy often said that Grandma Richards could make a meal out of nothing and that they had potatoes of some sort as a side dish at every meal.



My Grandma Richards was a fairly tall woman and large boned. She had a quiet ruggedness which I admired and although she was less demonstrative and affectionate than Grandma Gooch, I always knew that she loved me. She often shared stories of her life with me. I remember one time when we were sitting on the cement steps to the porch shelling peas and visiting. All

at once I saw a large black spider crawling on the brick next to me. Without hesitation, she leaned over and squished the spider with her thumb. I thought she was amazing!

Another time she told me of an experience she had after Grandpa died and she was living alone. She went to bed one night and was fast asleep when she awoke with a start. Something was biting her hand. She couldn't see what it was but she knew she needed to get it off. So, while making her way in the dark to the pull cord to turn on the light, she continued to shake her hand forcefully until the thing let go and thudded

against the wall. When the light was turned on, to her horror, Grandma saw a large black bat lying dead on the floor. Apparently it had come through a vent or in through a window and attached itself to her hand.

Another story she shared was about her experiences with a family pig. The large sow was due to have her litter any day and Grandma kept a close watch so that the sow didn't step or lie on the little piglets once they were born. One day, when she checked the pig pen, she discovered that the sow had broken through the fence and was gone. Grandma followed her tracks out into a nearby field and discovered that the sow had given birth under a sage brush and left the litter there. Knowing how much their family depended on the pigs for meat and lard, Grandma decided to take the piglets back to the house and send the men for the sow.

She knelt down and placed the piglets in her large apron. Then, grasping the corners of her apron, she proceeded to walk back to the house. She hadn't gone but a few steps when she heard the unmistakable sound of a very upset sow behind her. As she turned around to face the sow, she let the apron corners go and the piglets spilled out onto the ground. Grandma spotted a large piece of wood close at hand and quickly picked it up and held it to ward off the attack. The sow charged at her repeatedly, but each time she hit it with the club and drove it back. Finally the sow had had enough and left. Grandma hurried back to the farm house for help.



Later in her life she developed a talent for oil painting. She started with the painting by number kits and eventually painted without any aids. When I married she offered to give me one of these paintings. She had them displayed on her sun porch and after careful examination, I selected one. She confided in me that she had recently had her art appraised and the appraiser said that there was only one painting that would bring a good price if sold. It just happened to be the one that I had selected! That painting has graced my home for the last 44 years and continues to evoke sweet feelings of my Grandma Richards.

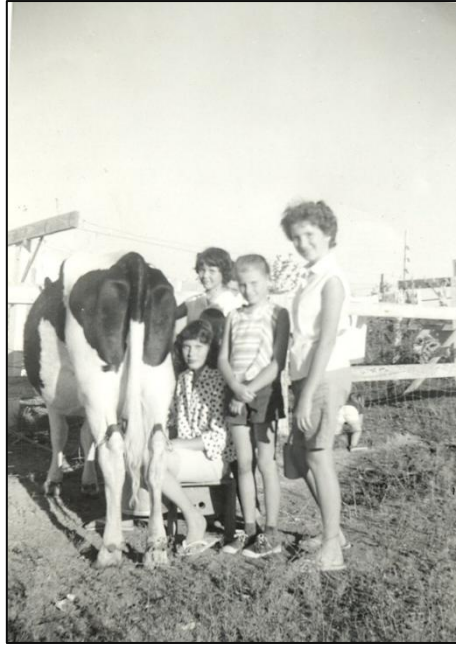
One of my favorite memories was of the time the extended family gathered to help with her yard. It was a large grassy area with several mature trees and a flower garden that extended across the front of the property. It was such a fun day, working together with the extended family to accomplish the task.

She was an avid genealogist and did a great deal of work on the family lines before she became too old to continue. She wrote and published a book about the history of West Jordan and later for



a Christmas gift presented the grandchildren with a compilation of histories of many of our ancestors.

As Grandma became unable to live alone, she moved from the “home place” to live with Aunt Ruby. She was a great example of noble womanhood and died in her 94th year on September 19, 1979. Her home and farmstead were eventually demolished to make way for a modern subdivision.



crying a lot. Mom knew something was wrong and took her to the doctor only to discover that she was allergic to milk and had developed a sterile bowel. She was immediately hospitalized.

Because she was in the hospital for several days, I took a turn staying with her. I remember sleeping in a chair by Lisa’s bed and putting my finger through the slats of the crib and letting her wrap her little fingers around mine. Her eyes were so sunken and dark and she

looked so pathetic that I felt my heart would break. I used every ounce of faith that I had and pleaded with the Lord that she would be spared.

(Personal history of Ilene Richards) We almost lost her. She was strapped to the bed on her back with IV feedings for 80 hours. She was not allowed a bottle or nipple of any kind in her mouth. Poor little thing. She lay there wide-eyed without sleep for 60 hours. Monday morning, the fourth day, we placed her name on the temple prayer roll. The doctor told us that she was going downhill. We had her administered to and prayed for her, but evidently our faith was not

sufficient. About 9:00 a.m. Monday morning, about the time the prayer was being uttered by the first session in the temple, she closed her eyes and went to sleep. By evening her bowel was almost completely well and she improved rapidly from that time on. Thank goodness for the gospel and prayer.

It was during this time that my Dad was called to be the stake

LIFE ON SUGAR FACTORY ROAD

After living in Shelley for about three years, Dad and Mom, who didn’t enjoy living in such close proximity to neighbors, decided to buy some property on which to build a home. The property they purchased was in a small community near Idaho Falls called Iona which was where the U&I Sugar Factory and its administrative offices were located. In the meantime, until they could pull the finances together to build, they purchased a house on the outskirts of Shelley. And so, in my sixth grade year, we moved to a very small two-bedroom frame house. It was so small that they bought a camp trailer for Kathy and I to use as a bedroom. The trailer was parked a few steps out from the back door and it was furnished with a double bed, a small kitchen, and couch. We really loved it, especially for slumber parties!

It was while we lived there that my mother had another baby girl, Lisa. Lisa was a pleasant baby but when she was about five months old she started



mission president. He had previously been the stake MIA Superintendent and the call to work in the stake mission came just about the time that we were getting ready to start building our new home. It was a puzzle to us children why he accepted the call when he knew we would be moving in the months ahead. Daddy informed us that he and mother had talked it over and decided that the call had come from the Lord and that they would alter their plans accordingly. Instead of building in Iona, they decided to build on some property that was adjacent to our home in Shelley.

Although I was disappointed with this, the wisdom of this decision was brought forcefully to my young mind when the following spring the whole area suffered from flooding following a winter of heavy snowfall. Daddy drove our family to Iona to see the situation there and we saw a raging torrent washing over the building lot where we had originally planned to build. We were all so grateful that our parents had followed the promptings of the Spirit and altered their original plans.

If there is one impression that I had of my parents in my early years it was of their dedication to their callings in the Church. Wherever we lived they were given important responsibilities and they magnified these callings and set an example of faithfulness for all the family. Their callings became our family's callings and we children shared in their experiences and grew from them.

I recall a time when they were teaching a temple preparation class. The class was held each week

and the consistency was an important element in keeping the class members moving forward and committed. Mom and Dad felt so strongly about teaching by the Spirit that each Thursday they would fast all day in preparation for teaching the class that evening. One day when I got home from school Mom was fixing supper for the family. I knew she was hungry and I asked her how she could stand to cook for the rest of us when she was fasting. She commented,

"The first day I fasted I thought I wasn't going to be able to do it. I was so hungry, especially as it

got near supper time and I was in the kitchen preparing the meal. Then I thought about how happy Satan would be if we were not successful in our efforts in our class and I said to him right out loud, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" From that time on it hasn't been hard for me to fast!"



This dedication to the Lord's kingdom was the hallmark of their lives and has been an example to all their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Their tireless efforts to "build the

kingdom" not only blessed all of our lives, but was a blessing to the countless individuals that they touched by their continuing example and service. Looking back I can see what wonderful role models my parents were for me and how they instilled in me a desire to use my talents for the Lord.

At the age of 16 I received my patriarchal blessing at the home of our stake patriarch, Roderick Millar. Following is that blessing which has always been a treasured guide to me:

"Sister Susan Richards, in the authority of the Holy Melchizedek priesthood I lay my hands upon your head and give unto you a patriarchal blessing, which will be a guide and comfort to you throughout your life. In seeking your blessing, you have desired that which is very sacred unto you.

The Lord has blest you, Susan, in a multitude of ways, especially to be born of goodly parents and to be taught and nurtured in the church. This blessing has come to you because you were faithful and obedient in the spirit world.

You have been sent upon the earth at this time because your Father in Heaven has a certain work for you to do here upon the earth. You are of the house of Israel through the loins of Ephraim and you are entitled to the blessings promised to this royal lineage.

Be humble. Learn to seek the Lord in prayer each day and pour out your appreciation unto Him for the blessings He has given you, and He will reveal unto you many important things concerning you and that which He would have you do. The desires of your heart in righteousness shall be granted unto you.

Be obedient unto your parents. Honor and sustain them and your days shall be prolonged upon the earth, that you may accomplish that which you have been sent here to do.

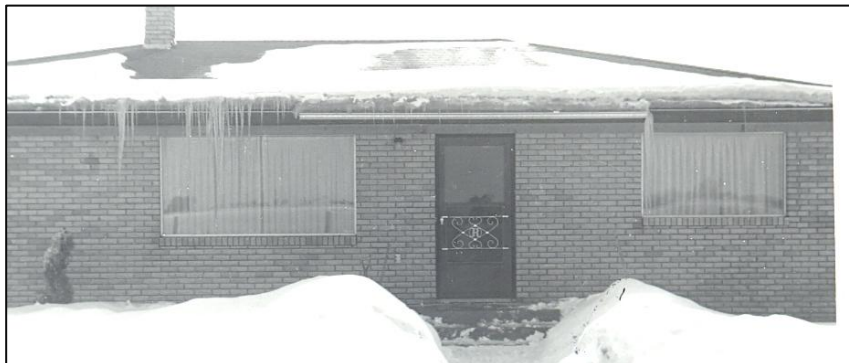
You shall be called to positions of leadership in the church.



You shall have the privilege of teaching the gospel to the youth of the church. Be diligent in your studies and to store your mind with knowledge. Be obedient to those who preside over you and you shall learn wisdom and you shall be as a light upon a hill which will lead to it those who are wayward and indifferent to the ways of the Lord, and you shall help them to obtain a knowledge of the truth and to become active in the church; and this shall surely bring great joy into your heart.

Be patient and humble and the time will come when the Lord will bring into your life a young man who shall desire to take you to the Holy temple where you may receive those great and glorious blessings at the hands of the Priesthood that will assist you in obtaining an exaltation in the celestial kingdom. You shall be blest with children, who shall be high in the leadership of the church and they shall be obedient unto you because of your faithfulness.

You shall be blest in due time to continue the search for the records of your ancestors and the powers of heaven shall be close to you, Susan, and shall help you in obtaining many records and to prepare them and to do their work in the temple and this shall mean a great deal to them and great joy shall fill your soul here and when you meet them in the resurrection.



I seal these blessings upon your head and seal you up to come forth in the morning of the resurrection, clothed with

glory, immortality and eternal life, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen."

WORK EXPERIENCES

Dad firmly believed that idleness was a curse and so from the time we were old enough to be good help, we were gainfully employed by him during the summer recess from school. He found jobs for us thinning and hoeing beets and he hired us children to work for him with his experimental beet plots. He was an agronomist for the company and his summer work included taking care of experimental plots of beets grown for seed.

Dad involved us in his work and we traveled from one location to another in a company station wagon. A small trailer with gardening equipment was pulled behind the station wagon. Small experimental plots of 3-4 rows were planted in gardens throughout the area. We planted the seedlings, cultivated them throughout the summer and when they went to seed and became heavy, we tied them up to laths that Dad drove into the row next to the plants. We had a large wad of string tied to our belt and we used the heavy string to weave in and out of the lath, which held up the seed-laden plants until they were fully ripe and could be harvested.

As we completed a plot, we traveled to the next one. These plots were grown throughout the Idaho Falls, Shelley, New Sweden, and Blackfoot areas. The times together in the car traveling from one location to another became times of visiting and sharing ideas and insights and of

coming to know Dad better. After an afternoon of working in the hot sun, he rewarded us with a cold pop or ice cream treat. Of course, the money we earned was always a boon, too.

I was taught at a young age the practical application of gospel principles. Once when Daddy was supposed to attend General Conference in Salt Lake City in June, we were trying to get all the plots weeded. I kept thinking that there were just too many to get done and Daddy kept saying that the Lord would help us to accomplish what was needed. The last day before he was to leave, we began making the rounds to the different gardens to cultivate the plots. To my surprise, every plot had been

weeded by the owner and we finished our rounds with time to spare. Daddy recognized that the Lord had provided the way for him to be able to attend to his Church duties and also take care of his work responsibilities.



One time he got us a job thinning beets in a neighbor's field. Although the field was only about an acre and a half, it seemed enormous to my older sister Kathy and I. Dad got up with us at 5:30 a.m. and worked with us until he left for his job at 8:00 a.m. I realized how hard that must have been for him, but it reaffirmed to me how important it was to him that we learn to work.

While we worked together he taught us important lessons. When we thinned the beets, he reminded us that if we did a good job right at the first with the thinning, that when it came time to hoe, we would not have such a hard time doing it. He compared this to the importance of us learning early in our lives to be obedient so



that later in our lives we wouldn't have to deal with the problems that come with disobedience.

During the annual two week recess for spud harvest we worked with Daddy in the beet fields, harvesting experimental plots. A crew of 2-3 adult men dug the beets with a shovel and we followed along topping the beets (cutting off the green leafy part on the crown of the beet) with a beet knife. This was a foot-long knife with about a two-inch-wide blade and a metal hook on the end. The handle was wooden and a leather strap was attached which went around the wrist and gave support. We straddled the beet row and followed the man who shoveled and loosened the dirt immediately around the beet. We hooked the top of the beet with the knife, lifted it into our other hand where we held it and then topped it with the knife. Then we threw the beets into a pile to be bagged and tagged and loaded for processing at the sugar factory in Lincoln.

At night we worked on a crew at the factory where the beets were washed and a sample of pulp was extracted. The sample was tagged and frozen to be transported to the Salt Lake City lab for analysis. During those years I became so proficient with a beet knife that once I sliced the toe of a boot on the man digging beets ahead of me. That incident kept him motivated to talk less and work more.

The hours during spud harvest were long but usually Dad let me help select the crew and so we always had several of my friends from high school, both male and female, and that always

livened things up a bit. Although we worked hard to meet Dad's demands, that didn't preclude a romantic moment now and then. The money I earned helped me buy my clothes and other things that I needed. I have always been grateful for what I was taught regarding a strong work ethic and skills of money management. These have been invaluable to me throughout my life and brought satisfaction and self-sufficiency.

The hand of the Lord was manifest during an experience I had working in spud harvest. The night crew that worked at the sugar factory (including me and several other high school students) completed our shift, loaded the equipment and the cards which had all the information for the plots on them into the back of the truck, and headed for home. It wasn't until the next morning when we were getting ready to go back out to work that Daddy discovered that the box containing the cards had apparently blown out of the back of the truck. Every card was lost. This was a serious loss for my Dad whose job it was to present all of this data to his superiors when the season's work was completed. To make matters worse, a bad wind storm had been blowing all night and probably scattered the cards far and wide.

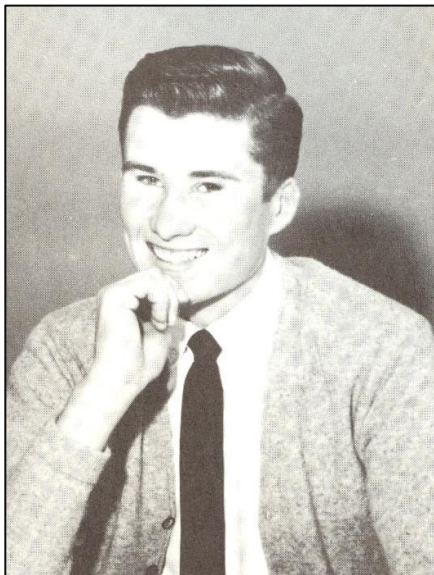
Dad gathered us kids around and we had prayer and then he had us retrace our route home the previous night. As we drove on a road just a few miles from the sugar factory, we saw an amazing sight: there were the tiny data cards that had blown from our truck the night before, plastered

against a wire fence! When we finished gathering them up and counted them, of 200 cards, we had not lost a single one! The wind storm of the night before had pressed them to the fence and kept them in place until we found them, safe and sound, the next day. This incident was a real testimony to me of the power of prayer.



FRIENDS, BOY FRIENDS, AND HIGH SCHOOL MEMORIES

(Personal history written in 1966) *I was fortunate to have some wonderful friends throughout my junior high and high school years. My best friends were Louise Taysom, Annette Barker, Jane Crookston, Carol Goble, and Renee Thomas. (Originally Fatal Five). We were all good students and involved in music and Future Homemakers of America. Some of us sang in a sextet that was led by the music teacher, Lynn Barker. We learned all kinds of songs and performed*



throughout the area. We had frequent slumber parties and spent a lot of our spare time together. We had a group of boys who

we enjoyed being with and many of my memories center on that group of good kids.

It seemed that I've always had a liking for boys. My mother used to say that as a small child I would wink at the deacons when they passed me the sacrament. Surely this was a bad omen for the years ahead.

In sixth grade I started having specific beaux. One of these was a boy a year older than me, Denny Harker. I had a huge crush on him and we rode the same bus and tried to be together as much as possible. At that tender age my parents refused to let me go to night movies without them and so my opportunities to meet up with Denny were limited. One time he convinced me that I should meet him at the afternoon matinee on Saturday. Some of his friends also had girls they were going to sit with and so I agreed. It seemed like the only way I could get to the theater was to include my little brother, Nathan, and so he came along. As soon as Denny and I sat together, Denny put his arm around me and we sat that way watching the movie.

I can't remember the movie but I do recall what a miserable time I had just worrying that my Dad would come in the theater and see me sitting there with Denny. Although Daddy didn't show up and I got away with it, I never pulled anything like that again. I had a healthy respect for my

Dad and his displeasure was enough motivation for me to be obedient.

My high school years were full of the usual ups and downs. My freshman year was carefully regulated by my ever watchful parents and they informed me that five dates was the total allotment for the year. This was in the days before the Church had taken an official stand on dating and suggested that 16 was the appropriate age to start dating. I decided to take one date to each of the five big occasions throughout the school year.

The first boy I dated was a 6'2" basketball player named Joe Cannon. His family had recently moved from Blackfoot, bought a dairy in the Woodville area, and he and his brother, Pete, quickly made themselves a part of the crowd at Shelley High School. Joe invited me to go with him to the Eastern Idaho State Fair in Blackfoot. When the appointed hour arrived, I was anxious and ready. Well, 3:30, 4:30, and 5:30 came and no Joe. Finally the phone rang at 6:00 and I lifted the receiver only to hear an apologetic voice at the other end say, "I had a flat tire and the only place I could find a tire for my Volkswagen was clear up the valley. Can we still go to the fair?" Well, he finally arrived and we did eventually make it to the fair and had a wonderful time. This date was the first of many.

Once Joe took me to the War Bonnet



Roundup in Idaho Falls.

Afterwards he was supposed to drop me off at a slumber party for a friend, Deonne Aldredge, whose party was down by the river. By the time we got out of the rodeo and started for the party it was late. We kept driving, trying to find the party and at one point we ended up on a narrow ledge that was right next to the river.

(Interstate 15 was under construction and the whole area was torn up.) We realized that we had gone too far so we tried to turn around. The ledge was too narrow and we got the car perpendicular to the river but couldn't jockey it any further. We had to leave the car and walk back along on the narrow road between the river and a canal. Pretty soon we could hear the party and see the campfire. Joe walked me to within 50 yards of the party and then I went on alone and he headed out, running for home.

Early the next morning I heard a tractor coming and figured that it was Joe and his dad coming after the car. I didn't think much more about it until later that day when Joe dropped by my house and proceeded to explain to my mother

what had happened the previous night. I had already filled her in on my part of the story but what I hadn't known was that when Joe and his dad went for the car, it had been stripped bare. Even the rims on the tires were gone and it was up on blocks. The thieves had taken out the seats, too. Of course, Joe's dad had to file a police report and so Joe wanted to



let my folks know that he would be in the "Daily Transcripts" in the newspaper! What a crazy turn of events! At the end of my freshman year, I was elected as cheerleader and FHA reporter and Joe was elected as student body president.

In the course of my sophomore year, I became interested in John Nale. It wasn't long until we started dating regularly. He seemed to be just the guy for me except that he was a Methodist. I had never dated a non-member before, but I knew he was a fine young man and so I convinced myself that I was justified. At the conclusion of that year I was elected as varsity cheerleader and a member of the student council.

That summer I worked as a housekeeper for the Maurice Oler family. Their mother had been in a car accident several years earlier and had been in a rest home in a coma. The father, Maurice, was both father and mother to the children during the week, and their mother's faithful sister, Blanche, would come from Rexburg each Saturday to help out. I approached Mr. Oler before summer began and he agreed that I could have the job. I cooked, cleaned, and played Mom to a family of 6 for six days a week. Looking back, I realize that my cooking skills were probably not too great but I tried hard to make things fun for the kids. I put green food coloring in a batch of bread to make it more interesting and once I tried my hand at making root beer in a large barrel on the lawn. The entire neighborhood showed up for the event. The root beer finally got mixed and bottled and we enjoyed it throughout the summer.

One day I could hear the kids outside laughing and screaming and when I ran to make sure that everything was alright, to my horror I found the

neighbor boys tossing all the girls in the ditch. I stormed out of the house and proceeded to scold the boys. I had not said two words before they picked me up and I joined the girls in the ditch. All in all, despite these occasional antics, I had a good summer and made the money I needed for the upcoming school year.

As I look back on my junior year it seems that my relationship with John Nale seemed to dominate. Dad was put in as stake mission president and with this new calling, full-time missionaries

visited our home frequently. When they found that I was dating a non-member, they tried to discourage me. John was such a fine young man that I decided to make an effort to convert him. I agreed to attend his church if he would attend mine.

One Sunday while attending his church, I noticed in the hymn book a phrase which referred to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost as one. I asked John to give me his own idea of the Godhead and he gave me the LDS description. After the services, I questioned his minister about his belief of the Godhead. We became involved in a lengthy discussion and I felt confident that if the minister would admit to John that the Methodist

doctrine of the Godhead didn't agree with his (John's) beliefs that he would seriously investigate the LDS church. But, the minister would not make any definite statements and so John wasn't able to see the point that I was trying to make.

John never did invite me to return to his church after that for I think he sensed that every time I went I just strengthened my own beliefs that Christ's restored church was true. I had explained temple marriage to him many times





activities that I would be involved in. I knew that the whole program was fashioned after our state government and this included elections for both the local and state officers. I decided that I would run for governor. Each week the local newspaper ran pictures of the girls that had been selected to attend from the schools in the surrounding area and I cut the articles and pictures out and memorized the names of the delegates. I created a notebook with ideas for campaign posters and gathered materials for use in my campaign.

and now I knew that this would not mean much to him if it did not mean enough to me that I would risk it by dating him. I told him we must break off our relationship. His mother called, very upset with me since the Junior Prom was in a few weeks and so we agreed that we would go to the Prom and that would be our last date. That night I was a candidate for queen and he was in charge since he was the class president, but neither of us felt much in the mood. As the evening came to a close, we said our good-byes and I committed myself to only date members from then on. The Lord blessed me for that decision in more ways than I ever dreamed possible.

GIRLS STATE '63

Toward the end of my junior year, I was selected to attend Girls State. I competed against 10 girls from the junior class by giving a short speech on citizenship. The night following the competition, the phone rang and the president of the Women's Auxiliary of the American Legion told me that I had been selected. I was so excited.

I had previously talked to other girls who had attended and I had a pretty good idea of the

We left on Sunday, June 2nd, on a chartered bus for the Northwest Nazarene College campus and a week of learning all about government. When we arrived, we registered and were assigned to a dorm room where we met our roommates for the week and had a while to unpack and get acquainted. At five o'clock the dinner bell rang and we all filed into the dining hall. Each table was set with distinctive place mats that corresponded with that day's activities. We sat at tables assigned to us according to the city, county and party we were a part of.

That evening I met my roommate, Penny, a Catholic girl and Linda, a Nazarene. We chatted for a while and then prepared for bed. Taking it for granted that they would say their prayers, I asked them if they were ready and upon getting

an affirmative answer, I switched off the light. Penny immediately protested. I told her that I understood her as saying she was ready to say her prayers. She quickly questioned me as to how in the world I expected her to pray with the lights off. To my amazement, she was reading her prayers and at the same time, fingering a long string of blue beads. That



opened the door for a discussion that lasted several hours as we talked about our religions. She had a small prayer book that she read from and that night she was praying for the Pope who was ill. This experience reminded me that there were many religions represented at Girl's State and I recommitted myself to representing the Mormon Church well.



Nationalist was me. The next day I continued to campaign and after the voting was done, it was announced that I had won. I immediately called my parents to give them the news and to remind them of their promise to come for the inauguration if I was elected. Mom had already heard the news on the radio and she and Dad were packed and ready to go.

Monday morning the intercom announced "Rise and Shine" and the dorms came to life. I had already gotten up and dressed so as to meet more girls before breakfast. Following breakfast we had flag ceremony. All the delegates lined up and marched to the flag pole, forming a big circle around it and joining in the Pledge. The Governor, Susan Farber, led the procession. The day was filled with a variety of activities from listening to speakers to vespers at night. We were divided into cities, mine being Thunder City. I was elected mayor. That evening at dinner the mayors were given the opportunity to speak. Tuesday, we separated into parties, the Federalists and Nationalists. Party songs, slogans, and meetings filled most of the day. Those desiring to run for office declared their candidacy, gave nomination speeches, and waited to see who had made it to the finalists. That night they announced the Federalist candidate for Governor was Jill Clark and the

Thursday we visited the state capital in Boise and I gave the State of the State address. While the other delegates were in session, I went to the Governor's office to relax. Susan Farber, last year's Governor, took me downstairs to meet a blind man who had a small curio shop and who each year presented the new governor with a decorated plate for a keepsake. I was touched by his kindness and wished that there was some way that I could repay him. A few months later I was in Boise for a state FHA convention, and I was given a red rose for my efforts in achieving the State Degree. Later that day I walked to the Capital and presented my blind friend with the rose and expressed my thanks, again. He threw

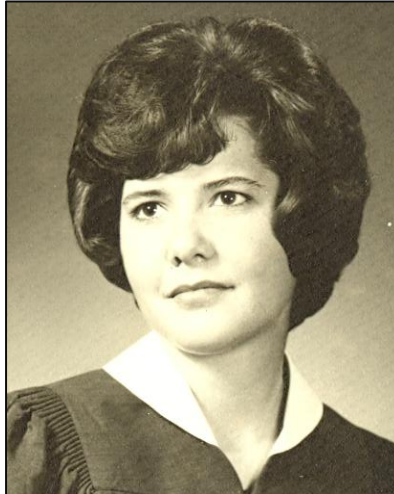


his arms around me and said that I was the first governor to ever repay the kindness. A few weeks later a letter from his daughter came in the mail with a plaque of Idaho in a package. She said that her father had requested that she send this to

me and to again express his thanks.

Mom and Dad arrived on Friday for the inauguration and I had the chance to introduce them to my many new friends. Prior to their arrival I received a Western Union telegram from some of my friends in Shelley with the following message: "Dear Sue. Congratulations to our governor. We're very proud of you and behind you all the way. Love, Marlow (Harker), Ralph (Oler), Les (Campbell), Kathleen (Browning), and Carolyn (Johnson)." These were friends from my ward back home and a year ahead of me in school but very supportive. It had been a wonderful week and it was hard to say good-bye but it was exciting to know that the next summer I would have the chance to attend Girl's State again, this time as governor.

The rest of the summer was spent working at Boyd's AG in Shelley and looking forward to my senior year. It was a great year, but it was also stressful and hectic and there were times when I could hardly keep pace with my many commitments. At the conclusion of my junior year I hadn't tried out for cheerleader because I knew I would be working after school and I didn't think it would be compatible but I had been elected as student body reporter and served on the student council. Soon after that I approached the people at the Post Register and asked about the possibility of running a column each week reporting the activities of our school. They agreed and so each week I wrote an article for the paper entitled, "Spud Speaks". Although this was a great success, it was also a lot of work to keep up with. I was also serving that year as Seminary President for the Shelley Stake and was selected as the director of the Pep Band. This was quite a challenge for me since I didn't even play a



musical instrument, but I soon learned how to read a band score and with my good sense of rhythm we got along okay. I was also a member of the high school sextet which brought a lot of opportunities to perform throughout the community. I served as Jr. Primary Chorister and worked three nights a week and on Saturdays at Boyd's AG.

One of the most enjoyable things I did my senior year was to organize our senior assembly. My committee and I decided to have a circus theme and before we were through we had constructed a circus tent and all. Almost all 80 students of our graduating class participated and it proved to be a great success. I guess the ability to organize

expressed itself early in my life.

My boss at Boyd's AG wrote the following in a letter or recommendation:

"Susan has an unusual organizing ability to coordinate her affairs and activities. I have been amazed that she could participate in all her school, church, and civic positions and responsibilities, doing an excellent job and yet still have time to work a full day on

Saturday and from two to three days a week after school. She has not asked for extra favors and special consideration in order to fulfill her commitments to her various offices."

There were many honors which accompanied the conclusion of my high school years. I was chosen "Miss Leadership", "Miss Shelley High", and Valedictorian of my graduating class.

LDS YOUTH ACTIVITIES

One of my favorite memories of my teenage years was of the stake dances that were frequently held at the Shelley Tabernacle. These dances were usually sponsored by the stake MIA and were held once or twice a month and on

holidays such as Christmas Day and New Year's Eve.

The tabernacle was a beautiful, old structure that was the predecessor of our modern day stake centers. The main body of the building was a large assembly hall with a pulpit on a raised stage with choir seats below this stage and bench seats to seat about 600 people. Directly behind the raised stage was a folding wall that opened onto a large dance hall.

This hall had tall stained glass windows that could be opened to help with the ventilation and a small platform at the far end that accommodated a live band. Downstairs there was a large area that had once been a baptismal font and had been turned into a ladies dressing room.

When we arrived, all of us girls congregated in this dressing room, checked our hair and make-up and then proceeded to the upstairs hall and the dance. On warm summer nights the windows were opened and the sounds of the live band could be heard for blocks along the quiet streets.

These stake dances were the focal point of our



community and not only the youth attended but many married couples also. Since my father was the stake MIA Superintendent during some of my teenage years, my parents were usually present at the dances. They were wonderful dancers and would move effortlessly around the floor, the envy of many of us younger kids who weren't nearly as graceful. I loved these dances! These were heady and happy times!

The stake women's MIA president that worked with my Dad was a sweet lady named Verda Armstrong. Her husband wasn't an active member of the Church and frequently she turned to my Dad for counsel. During the time they served together Verda's son was having some emotional problems and one night he hung

himself. Of course, this was very sad and tragic for everyone concerned. Verda asked my dad if he would speak at the funeral. In those days before much was known about depression, the Church's stand on suicide was that anyone committing suicide could not obtain the Celestial Kingdom.



I remember my Dad agonizing over what to say at the funeral and making it a matter of fasting and prayer. In his talk he said that a person who takes his own life is suffering from depression and that the Lord understands this and will judge that person with mercy. My Dad's comments were a great comfort to Verda and her family at this time of loss.

Another experience I recall was of when our stake was reorganized. I had a feeling that my Dad was going to be in the new stake presidency. At that time I was dating Joe Cannon and I told him that I thought my dad would be involved in the change. He couldn't imagine that I would know such a thing, but I had a strong feeling about it.

After the reorganization and my Dad's calling to be second counselor to Gene Christensen, I asked Daddy about it. He said that he had worried that he would be called to be a part of the new stake presidency and that one night he was reading in the Book of Abraham and he came upon the words, "these I will make my rulers." At that moment the Spirit bore witness to him that he would be involved in the change. I was proud of my Dad and always felt that he had great spiritual power.

One time in my junior year Daddy gathered our family around and told us that he had had an unsettled feeling and sensed that something bad was going to happen. This shook me up and for several days I felt frightened whenever any of us were out of sight or away from our home. Then Daddy received word that two of his brothers had had serious heart attacks. Following this, the feeling left and he knew why he had had the foreboding feelings.



POLITICAL ISSUES

During my junior year of high school, President Kennedy was killed. I remember learning about it while I was at school and on my way to the seminary building. I'm ashamed to say that when I first heard the news, I was happy since our family voted Republican (except Mother) and Kennedy wasn't our choice. But, as I listened to my teachers and the news, it hit me just how terrible it was that our country's president had been murdered. It seemed like for years following this event, there was speculation regarding the who and why. I'm not sure that we will ever know the truth regarding it but long ago I decided that when I die I am going to get to the truth regarding the matter.

Another issue going on during my growing up years was the civil rights movement in the South. Although it was a very gripping and bloody time for people in the southern states, I never really realized the extent of the discrimination and the many injustices that were part and parcel of being black in that era. I just assumed that the



Civil War had resolved the issues and that life was good for the Negroes. (That is what we called those of African American heritage.) Looking back I can't believe that I wasn't more aware but it was just something that was not a part of my life's experiences.

I do recall that my Dad became interested in the John Birch Society and supported Barry Goldwater in his bid for the presidency. I knew that both my parents always voted but politics wasn't talked about much in my home and there were no news magazines or other circulars that would have exposed me to it. I don't think we had a debate club in our high school and our government and history courses mostly dealt with the past and not current issues. When I attended Girls State I was surprised to see the level of involvement my peers from other schools had in the political process. This motivated me to pay attention to what was going on around me and in the state and national governments. Of course, when I married into the Larsen family, a very politically active bunch, politics became an important part of my life and I've tried to stay as informed and involved as my circumstances allowed.



GAINING A TESTIMONY

I have often heard and believe that in every person's life (if they are seeking it) there will come a defining moment when he (or she) will know for herself that the gospel is true. Being raised in the Church, I had always enjoyed the blessings of the gospel. Towards the end of my senior year, looking ahead to the opportunity to return to Girl's State and have an influence as Governor, I decided that I needed my own testimony. I was aware of Moroni's promise in Moroni 10:4 and decided to put it to the test. I

spent a short time quickly reading through the entire Book of Mormon. Late one night after everyone else had gone to bed, I completed the book and knelt by a chair in our living room. I told the Lord that I needed to know for myself of the truthfulness of the gospel.

After I prayed, I continued kneeling for a while and then sat back down in the chair and awaited the manifestation that Moroni had promised. It didn't come. After a while, I went to bed. For the next several days I mulled over in my mind what my next move should be. I had read the book, prayed about it, and yet had not received a witness by the Holy Ghost. I determined to talk with my mother about it. She was always good to listen and help me know what I should do.

My timing was certainly not the best. On the day that I had decided to talk with Mom about it, I arrived home from school to find Grandma Gooch sitting at the dining room table, mending a pile of clothes while visiting with Mom. Sometimes when Grandpa Joe went fishing he would bring Grandma to our

house so she and Mom could have some time to visit. This was such a day. I walked into the kitchen and basically stated my dilemma. I had read with faith, asked for a witness, and none had come. I felt that maybe the Church wasn't true after all. It all seemed pretty cut and dried to me.

What I hadn't bargained for was Grandma's response. She forcefully reminded me that she was a woman who had married and buried two husbands and one small child, raised 12 children during Depression years, seen three sons go off to fight in World War II, struggled through all kinds of trials and through it all, had been sustained by her faith. Who was I, so young and

inexperienced, to doubt the validity of the gospel!!! Her response caught me off guard and I quickly retreated to my bedroom.

Later, after Grandma had gone, Mom came into my room and sat beside me on the bed. She confided to me that she had not had a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel until after she was grown and married. She said that during the years that she had doubted, she had asked herself these questions: "Is there anything about the gospel that isn't uplifting, good, and fine?" "Will my life be happy if I follow the teachings of the LDS Church?" She said that she could answer those questions with a resounding, "Yes!" and so she decided that rather than abandon her beliefs, she would continue striving to live the gospel and trust that in the Lord's own time she would have her witness of its truthfulness.

Then she gave me this advice. "Don't worry too much about knowing right now. Just keep living it and, if necessary, hang on to my testimony until your own is strong." That seemed like good advice and I decided to do just that.

A few months later my friends and I decided to make a trip to Salt Lake City to visit my sister, Kathy, who was working there. It was a big adventure for us to do something on our own and we booked tickets on a Greyhound bus. It was night by the time we arrived in Salt Lake and I was mesmerized as I looked out the bus window at all the lights. All at once the Salt Lake Temple came into view and at that moment there came into my heart a witness that it was the Lord's temple and that the gospel was true. It was a sweet experience. I am so grateful for my mother's wisdom and counsel to me and that

I knew enough to "hang on" to her testimony until the promise was fulfilled in my own life.

Another experience that confirmed to me that I had a testimony happened while visiting my Aunt Ellafair and Uncle Ray in Nampa. Our family attended their Sunday meetings with them and a young man in their ward showed an interest in me. Before our time in Nampa was over, he and I were both pretty smitten and so we wrote letters back and forth for most of my sophomore year. The following summer my parents decided to make another trip to Nampa, partly for me to spend some time with Jimmy. I think that they felt that if I could have some time with him, my

infatuation might subside and I wouldn't be so moonstruck. Anyway, we spent several days in Nampa and Jimmy and I had some time together.

The first night he invited me to go to a local teen hangout to a dance. It didn't take long to realize that the setting was not a comfortable one for me. The environment wasn't wholesome and so we soon left and just drove around Nampa for a while. Being from out of town, I was

unfamiliar with where we were going and eventually we ended up parked in a secluded area next to a lake. This was totally new terrain for me (not the lake). I had never had a boy "park" with me before. I guess back in my hometown of Shelley, my reputation and family background had been a deterrent. I had never been in a compromising situation such as this.

The minute the car stopped, Jimmy decided that he would cozy right up to me. I was alright with his arm around me but when he wanted to get more involved, I resisted. I told him that it was late and that he needed to take me home. At first he didn't take me seriously but commented,





"Oh, your old man doesn't even know where you are and won't care if you're a little bit late." (Just calling my Dad an "old man" was offensive and further convinced me that I didn't want to be there with him another minute.) When I further resisted he made the statement, "What's the big deal. No one even knows you're here. Loosen up!"

His words hit home. It was true. I was about 200 miles from home, away from all my friends and out of sight of my parents. Surely if I was going to lower my standards this would be the perfect situation in which to do it. But at that moment I also had come to me with great force the truth that I knew the Lord knew where I was and what I was doing, and that I would not want to displease Him and go against the truths I had been taught. With that knowledge in my heart, I took a firm stand and Jimmy relented, started the car, and delivered me home.

Later, thinking back on that experience, it came to me that I did know, beyond any doubt, that there was a God, that He was aware of me, and that I was accountable to Him for my choices, especially since I had been nurtured in the gospel and felt the Holy Ghost in my life. There were still many things about the gospel that I didn't

understand or agree with, but I could not deny that I knew that the Lord was real and that I had felt His love in my life.

My testimony continued to grow as I showed obedience to gospel principles. I especially had numerous experiences with getting answers to prayer that confirmed the Lord's watch care over me. I had a motto that I lived by. It was, "Do what is right, let the consequence follow." I put that motto to the test time after time and I was never sorry that I had taken the high road, resisted temptation, and kept myself morally clean.

That choice to stay morally clean was one of the most important decisions that I ever made and one that frequently was put to the test. I have always been grateful that I kept that commitment to myself and was able to keep my relationships in my dating free of anything that would taint or bring shame to me.

GIRLS STATE '64

(History of '66) The summer following graduation I attended Girl's State again and was involved with the women's group who planned it for the girls. They requested that I be there on Saturday for a briefing of the week's events and



they even paid for my plane fare to Boise. I was so excited to get to fly since I had never had the chance before. I took some motion sickness pills before leaving Idaho Falls so I didn't get sick, but my ears began to ache and I couldn't get them to pop to equalize the pressure.

By the time I arrived in Boise I was in misery and even after we arrived, my hearing was severely impaired. It was especially bad while I was eating. If I tried to carry on a conversation, the sounds of my own chewing totally drowned out the voices around me. I worried that my ears would never clear but luckily, by the time the girls began arriving on Sunday, I could hear again.

Saturday night I went to dinner with the women on the staff and we reviewed assignments for the week ahead. To my surprise, most of the women on the staff had alcoholic beverages with their meals. Fortunately no one got inebriated and the evening turned out fine. This was my first exposure to the world outside of Shelley, a predominately Mormon community.

Before going to Girl's State I had confided in my mother that I was worried that I would be a disappointment to the girls. I knew that Susan Farber, last year's governor, had been so "picture perfect" and adored by all of the delegates and I knew I was anything but perfect. After confiding my fears to Mother, she gave me some advice



that helped me succeed with my responsibilities. She said, "Susan, just live your religion and there will be nothing you will lack as Governor." She was right. I extended to all the delegates a Christ-like love and I had a wonderful experience.

The whole week was so satisfying. Since I was more of a guest than a delegate, I was able to attend all the meetings and activities and just enjoy the associations with all the girls. Soon the week was over and the night of the inauguration arrived. I had been asked to give remarks at the final meeting of all the delegates and their parents. When it was my turn I had all 285 girls stand and join in singing the Girl's State song. It captured our feelings about our week and the precious friendships that had been formed.

That night my parents were honored guests at dinner. Following the meal, Sister Hall, the director, suggested that since there was a storm brewing that we should skip flag ceremony. I

hated to see us lose our last opportunity to join together around the flag pole just because of a



little rain so I issued the challenge, "All real Americans line up for flag lowering!" The dining hall emptied as all 285 of us lined up and marched to the flag pole. No sooner had it been lowered and folded than it started to rain in torrents. We headed for the safety of the buildings, soaked, but patriotic!

That was the last I knew of Girls State except for a little letter of thanks which came a few weeks later. It was Mrs. Hall, the director, who wrote, "I have been director for 14 years and I've never known a year that we had a finer spirit than this one and you, Susan, seemed to radiate just something wonderful." Little did she realize that my religion was just shining through!

On August 28, 1964 my older sister, Kathy, was married in the Salt Lake Temple to Stanley Richard Bennion.

OFF TO COLLEGE

After a summer of working at Huntsman's Foodtown and counting down the days, September arrived and I left for college. I was so eager to move into the dorm that I arrived in Rexburg two weeks early. I had registered previously so there was really no reason for me to be there so early, but my excitement got the best of me. I spent the first few nights in the dorm all by myself, but soon the students began to arrive and the excitement increased.



I soon met the president of our ward MIA (Young Women's Program) and was called to be one of her counselors. It was fun to jump right in to being involved in the ward. It was also a time of transition for me as I first started attending Relief Society. From the first lesson and activity I knew I loved the Relief Society organization! I was so grateful that I had that early introduction to it and that it became an important part of my life early on.

My roommates were two of my best friends from high school, Louise Taysom and Annette Barker. We also had a roommate from St. Anthony, Janine Waldrom, who was a sophomore and turned out to be a great friend as well as roommate.



When classes began, I felt overwhelmed. I had always been a good student, but now I had doubts about my ability to meet the demands of the different professors. I made a phone call home to Mom and Dad expressing my dismay at all that was required and warned them that I probably would be getting "D"s on my report card. Daddy's response was, "Oh, relax and just have fun!" Luckily, as I continued to attend classes and applied myself, things seemed a little less formidable and by semester's end I had a straight "A" report card.

Although Ricks College was only about a 45 minute drive from my home in Shelley, I was determined to “make it” on my own and so I stayed at college and didn’t go home for the weekends like a lot of the students did. Part way through the semester I started feeling listless and discouraged. I couldn’t figure out why, not suspecting I might have a case of homesickness.

One Saturday morning I was in my apartment at Barnes Hall and I looked out the front window to see a group of high school seminary students touring the campus. Much to my surprise I realized that one of the adult chaperones was my father! He was serving in the stake presidency at the time and had volunteered to help with the outing. The minute I saw him I felt my heart leap within me and I went rushing out of the apartment to greet him! It was so good to see him! We didn’t visit for long but long enough that I had a touch of home and that was all that I needed. The gloom that had been overshadowing me left and I got back into things and got along fine!

One of the most difficult things for me at college was that there was nowhere to escape to when I felt like I needed a little time alone. I had been raised in a rural community and our home and property on the outskirts of Shelley had lots of quiet places that I could



go and think. I could walk back to the U&I Sugar Company farm and sit on a hay stack or I could walk a mile up the road and climb the water tower and just sit up there and have some alone time.

When I got to college I realized that this “alone” time was a luxury. No matter where I went there were always other students and I missed the chance to just relax without any social pressures. It was kind of a paradox. I loved the

constant excitement and activities of the college life and my new-found freedom, but in the midst of it, there was a need for quiet time, too.

My freshman year was filled with a variety of extra-curricular activities. I was selected as the freshman class Homecoming representative and had responsibility for the parade float. Although our committee worked hard, the float was a flop! I had been nominated for Homecoming queen but didn’t make it past the finals, so I felt like a

flop, too. Later I ran for Associated Women’s representative and lost that race.

Fortunately, my most enjoyable activity, dating, required no campaigning. This was one arena that I felt confident in. By the time the year was over, I had dated 73 different boys. Although I hadn’t found the “one and only” I had made some wonderful friendships and broadened my horizons as to the kind of a young



man I wanted to marry someday.

As student body election time rolled around, I decided to give it a try. I had just been selected two weeks earlier as "Miss Ricks College" where I had competed against 10 finalists in a variety of categories including cooking, poise and appearance, talent, and interviews. Much to my surprise, I won the title and with this boost to my morale I decided to run for the student body office.

Although I made it through the primary elections, when the final votes were counted, I lost the election to Theron Anderson. This was such a disappointment especially since I knew that all the officers received full tuition scholarships for the next year and I knew that I needed a scholarship.

A few weeks later, Ron Hart, the new student body president, approached me and asked if I would

consider being V.P. of Finance. This position was the only office which was appointive because of the nature of the work involved. The other student body officers had voted to have me fill the position. I was elated and grateful to know that I would be receiving scholarship help for my sophomore year. (\$110 dollars/semester and one gold blazer).

In preparation for the upcoming year, all the new and old student council members were invited to participate in an all-expense paid trip to Yellowstone Park for a three-day leadership conference. As well as doing some planning for

the upcoming school year, we also toured the Park and got better acquainted. It was with mixed emotions that I returned home for the summer and focused my efforts on my summer employment at Huntsman's Food Town.

I was excited for the upcoming year at Ricks and my anticipation grew as the summer passed. Little did I realize that all my plans would be disrupted by a very handsome 6'4" returned missionary who would become the focal point of my life!



SECTION III: OUR LIFE TOGETHER



MEETING "THE ONE AND ONLY!" (Fall of '65)

[Life story excerpts] There he stood, tall and handsome, with a mandolin cradled in his arms. He and his brother Staff were leading us in some folk singing (a hootenanny) at an MMen and Gleaner activity, a regional event involving the Blackfoot, Shelley, and Firth Stakes. He looked like a carefree sort of guy; the kind who has a serious thought once a week. Following the program, he made his way to the refreshment table and helped himself to the goodies. Unable to convince anyone to make a proper introduction, but determined to make his acquaintance, I boldly introduced myself.

"Hi. You don't know me, but I know you, or at least, know of you. Your Grandma told me and my girlfriends all about you and so we were hoping to meet you tonight. I hear you are going to Ricks College this fall."

That's how it all began that fateful July evening. The next night there was a dance and it wasn't long before we were dancing together. The evening passed all too quickly and was soon over. Although I was hoping that he would offer to give me a ride home after the dance so that we could have more time together, he didn't. That night as I reported in after the evening's activities, I told my parents that I had spent most of the

dance with a certain Steve Larsen, newly returned missionary son of Allan Larsen and grandson of J. Berkeley Larsen. I



added, "I really hinted that I wanted to see him again, but he is either really smooth and is playing hard-to-get or he is really naïve and doesn't have a clue about romantic things." (It was the later.)



And so he left for Ricks College for summer school and I stayed in Shelley until the new school year began. Although I invited him once to another activity we were having in Firth, he was involved in his studies and didn't respond. (Later, after we were married a while, he admitted that when he first met me he thought I was a little bit funny looking!)

When school started in September, I was delighted to learn that I had a history class with his brother, Staff. The first day of class we were told that there weren't enough books for every student to have his own, so I suggested that Staff and I share one. It was a clever move on my part because Steve and Staff were roommates and the shared book gave me a perfect excuse to go visiting and get better acquainted with Steve.

Soon we were dating exclusively and spending every spare minute together. I was serving as a student body officer and he was president of the sophomore class. Our courtship was spent attending college activities together. It seemed that from the beginning we were determined to keep our relationship sweet and clean and we spent the time following school dances walking and talking. We discussed our future together,



Ricks College Student Body Officers 1965-66
Susan Richards, Shanna Tibbitts, Laura Rigby
Ron Messer, Ron Hart, Theron Anderson

the kind of family we'd like to have, and our ideas on discipline and finances.

We felt comfortable with each other. Prior to our engagement, Steve talked as if he knew we would get married, but my feelings were not as definite and upon one occasion I said to him, "But I'm not sure that I love you!" Without any hesitation, he responded, "Oh, yes you do. You just don't know it!"

I didn't know it and the decision to choose a companion for eternity seemed too monumental for someone like me to make. I kept wondering if he truly was my "one and only" out of all the men on the planet. As I thought it through I realized that probably I didn't need to consider all the men who were presently living on the earth, just the young, unmarried LDS men. That definitely narrowed the field! But nevertheless, I didn't feel like I knew "beyond

a shadow of a doubt" that Steve was the one. This troubled me and I began asking some of my favorite adults if they "knew" before they took the leap into marital bliss.

My high school music teacher, Lynn Barker, was a person that was so conservative and steady and so I asked him if he "knew" beyond any doubt before he got married. Without hesitation he said, "The morning I went to the temple for my wedding, I said to myself, "Lynn Barker, what on earth are you doing?" I couldn't believe that anyone could move ahead with such an important decision without more certainty.

At one point in our relationship Steve invited me to attend a Delta Phi activity at a cabin in Island Park. One of the evening's activities was a dance. Part way through the dance some wild music was played which inspired Steve to do the "monkey", a new dance which involved gyrations; holding the arms out in front of you pretending to be climbing a rope or vine. Steve was really getting into the dance and I thought he looked so ridiculous that all my doubts began to surface again. Upon returning home I called my mother and expressed my doubts. She very patiently



talked me through my feelings, encouraging me to carry on with the relationship, not judging Steve too severely just because he had let his hair down for a while.

During that time as I wrestled with the decision, some people said some things to me that helped me understand that I could move ahead in faith, despite my misgivings. Someone told me, "There are probably several people in the world that you could marry and find happiness with." That was a new thought to me. Another said, "As important as who you marry is what you do with your marriage. Your daily decisions will determine if the choice was the right one." That gave me courage and I decided to move ahead. On December 4th we announced our engagement.

We decided that due to financial considerations we would get matching wedding bands and so instead of an engagement ring I got "pinned". I wore his Delta Phi pin on my coat and his Delta Phi ring (wrapped with lots of tape so it would fit) on my ring finger.



Once the decision to get engaged was made, all the doubt left and I finally felt the peace about the decision that I had been seeking. We were married in the Idaho Falls Temple on March 4th, 1966.

A few memories of that special time are worth mentioning. We were married on a Friday morning and Thursday afternoon I was sitting in a Spanish class at Ricks College. One of my classmates leaned over in her desk and said to me, "Aren't you getting married tomorrow?"

I affirmed that I was. "Then what are you doing in class today!?" she said. All at once the reality of it hit me and I got up and left class and went





back to the dorms to get ready to go home.

That night I was up late getting things ready with my mother and I said to her, "I just can't believe I've made it!" "Made what?" she said. "Made it to the temple. Somehow I thought this time would never come."

"Susan, going to the temple is just as natural for you now as being baptized was for you when you turned eight. You have lived worthy of that blessing and there is nothing magical about this day arriving any more than about other gospel blessings coming into your life."

I had never thought of it that way. She talked to me about the endowment and said that there would be much that I wouldn't understand. She encouraged me to listen carefully to all that I was taught and to focus on the feelings I had and then return to the temple often to participate and learn more. She was right that parts of the endowment seemed strange to me and the temple clothing was very different than what I expected but I tried to take her counsel and soak in the

peace that I felt during my experience.

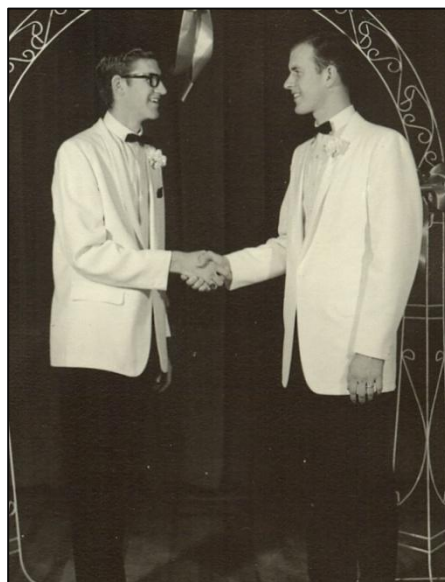
Since the day I received my endowment was also my wedding day, I was understandably distracted but I remember listening to the covenants and being in awe of the magnitude and beauty of what I was promised! That feeling has never left me and even now when I attend the temple I am in awe of the Lord's glorious promises to us if we live worthy of our temple blessings.

Other memories I have of that morning include being to the temple earlier than Steve and sitting with my mother waiting for him to arrive. He came into the temple almost on a run with his temple suitcase at his side and he looked so handsome and eager!

After we completed the endowment, I thought that we were through but Mother informed me that we still needed to get married. Our dear friend, Willard Wray, was the one who performed the marriage. He always teased us that we were his first wedding after being called to be a temple sealer and that he sure did "good work" (referring to our marriage.)

I remember kneeling at the altar and feeling such an overwhelming gratitude for my temple marriage and for Steve and part way through the ceremony starting to cry and crying until the whole ordinance was completed. (Tears of joy, of course!)

After the ceremony we took a few pictures outside on the temple grounds and then the wedding party got in their cars to go to the Westbank Restaurant for the wedding breakfast. I was walking by my mother and she turned and said,



"You go with him from now on," pointing to Steve. With her comment, it began to sink in that we really were husband and wife!

Our families hosted a reception for us that evening in Shelley. It was a wonderful time and many family and friends from Shelley, Blackfoot, and Rexburg attended. One fellow came through the line and said to us, "Well, this is kind of like combining two dynasties!" I guess he was just referring to our two strong LDS families that were represented in our union.

Over the years I have thought about that comment. On Steve's side of the family he had a grandfather, J. Berkeley Larsen, and his wife, Florence, who both came from pioneer stock several generations earlier, and Barbara's parents, the Elswoods, were converts to the Church and immigrants from Denmark. My grandparents on both sides, John and Clara B. Richards and Nathan and Abby Johnson Robinson, were from faithful pioneer families whose devotion to the Church had been a righteous example for my parents. Truly our future family would be blessed with a legacy of righteousness!

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Two days after our wedding we attended stake conference in Blackfoot and saw Steve's father sustained as stake president of the Blackfoot West Stake. The following Monday we were back



in class at Ricks College taking midterm tests and adjusting to married life.

A few weeks prior to our wedding, I had been nominated as a candidate for Woman of the Year.

This was the most prestigious award given to a woman student on campus and I was thrilled to be nominated. The assembly and voting were during the annual Women's Week.

My mother, as well as Barbara, was with us that day. It was truly a thrilling moment in my life to hear my name read as the "65-66 Woman of the Year" and to be presented with a lovely portrait of myself which they unveiled at the assembly and which would later hang in a hall in the student center.

Following the events of the day, as my mother helped me return to my apartment, she gave me some wise counsel. "Susan, this has been a wonderful honor you've received today. Now you are entering a new phase of your life. Give yourself to your new task and I promise you that the joys you will find in the future will surpass even that which you have experienced today." As the years have passed, I have come to realize more and more how wise her counsel was!

Before we were married we had talked about going ahead with our family even if it meant cutting my schooling short. We were advised by some to postpone having our family for a few years until Steve completed college, but the whisperings of the Spirit dictated otherwise. A few weeks





after our wedding, I became very ill with morning sickness. I was still in school and wanted to finish my degree (Associate), but I struggled to get to class and keep up with my studies. The harder I pushed, the sicker I became. Our bishop, Ralph McBride, and Steve administered to me and gave me a blessing. In the blessing I was counseled to be patient and accept the new direction my life was taking. I felt edified and strengthened.

Two months later I graduated from Ricks. Many of my close friends were making plans to continue their education at BYU and I began to wonder if I could really find fulfillment in caring for my husband and expected baby. Steve, sensing my discouragement and doubts, presented me with a book entitled, "Motherhood, a Partnership with God". He wrote some beautiful thoughts on the inside cover and bore witness that the work I was doing in establishing a home would reap a harvest of joy. His sweet support seemed to enlarge my vision of the task at hand and I looked forward with renewed commitment to home and family.

THE SUMMER OF '65 ON THE FARM

Our first summer together was memorable, to say the least. We were nearly penniless and needed good employment to help us save for the

expenses of the upcoming year at BYU. Steve's father offered him a job moving pipe and helping on the farm and even offered to let us live in the little labor house as part of his wages. The house was in sad need of repair but the offer of free housing was too good to refuse.

We stayed with the Larsen's for several days while the house was being fixed up. Steve plumbed in a toilet and running water and Barbara got some wallpaper and a carpet remnant for the living room which made the place look very homey. A refrigerator and bed were purchased and I made curtains for the kitchen out of spare hand towels. Some orange crates served as cupboards. One back bedroom was used as a storage area and sealed off since we didn't need the room. It was a comfortable little house and so convenient to Steve's work. We settled in for the summer, content and grateful for the break from school and the rigors of college life.

Since we didn't have a bathtub or shower, we used a large washtub that we filled with water heated on the stove. It was such a job getting it filled that baths became a once-a-week event. I took a bath first and was able to fold up and fit comfortably in the tub, but it presented a special challenge for Steve. He sat in it with his hairy





always treated me well during the time that Steve and I were courting and now living in such close proximity to them really increased my appreciation for them. Barbara was so talented musically; her talents were always in demand. She hadn't started taking piano lessons until she was in 7th or 8th grade and was largely self

arms and legs dangling out on all sides like a gigantic spider. This weekly ritual always brought lots of laughter.

Although I was pregnant, I was through with morning sickness and thought that I could work part-time and help with expenses. Barbara, being a good friend of Jack and Roma Kesler, suggested that I apply at Kesler's Market in Blackfoot. Barbara took me in, introduced me, and I was hired immediately. I worked part-time, driving back and forth from the farm, a trip of about 15 miles. This was not a problem for me except when I worked the late shift from 4 to 11 p.m. I have always had a fear of the dark and driving home alone on dark and unfamiliar country roads took all the courage that I could muster. Many times my imagination got the best of me and every shadow proved a threat and every sagebrush, a lurking danger. These late night journey's were a constant concern and a part of the summer job that I was glad to see come to an end when we left for Provo in September.

One of the wonderful advantages of living on the farm and working for Allan was that I was able to get better acquainted with my in-laws. They had

taught. But, she was an eager learner and took any musical classes that were offered so that she could improve her skills. She was also a gifted organist and frequently served as ward or stake organist. She had the distinct honor of playing the organ at the Idaho Falls Temple dedication.

Barbara took great pride in her home and created a wonderful environment for her family. She planned meals a week in advance, was prudent in her purchases, organized her spice rack alphabetically, decorated her home in the most modern decor, enjoyed experimenting with new recipes, refinished old furniture, sewed most of what she and her daughters wore, and encouraged all of her seven children to excel in their musical abilities.

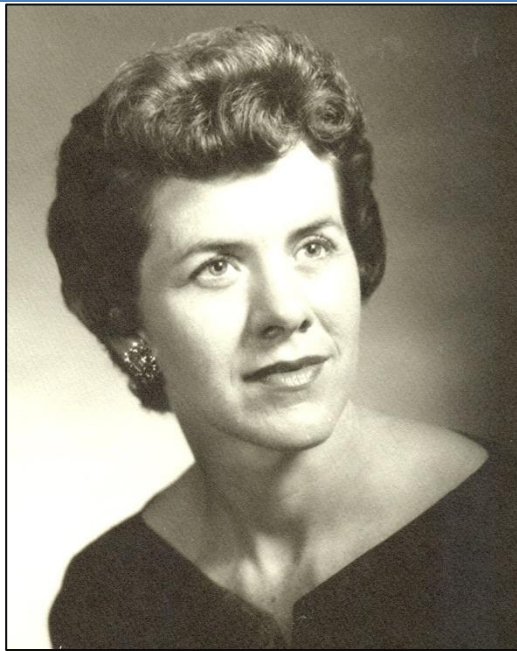
When I was first a guest in her home, I could see that she was masterful at most homemaking arts and it was rather intimidating. But, she was quick to encourage and share her expertise with me. During those early years of marriage, I watched her and tried to emulate all of her wonderful homemaking abilities. Although to this day I come up short, her influence in my life was tremendous and something I will be eternally grateful for.

Another thing I admired in Barbara was her love of nature. She frequently commented that she drew strength and joy from the world around her. This excerpt from her family letter is typical of her:

[February, 1980: Barbara] *I want to tell you of the beautiful day we had here last Thursday. It snowed the day beforeand Thursday when the sun came out, there was this beautiful clear blue sky and all the trees, bushes, and weeds looked like they had been flocked. I had to take time away from household duties and go for a walk and just soak in all of that beauty and breathe deeply and fill my lungs full of that clear, invigorating air. And then to top it all off, when I returned home, the crab apple tree in front was full of the cedar waxwings again. They are such saucy looking little birds with their top-knot and their pretty coloring. It was the kind of a day that you like to store away in your memory and pull it out some hot, summery day.*

Although to some people Barbara may have seemed reserved, she was very fond of using “puns” and she came up with some great ones. The following paragraph in one of her family letters gives an example of her humor:

[October, 1982: Barbara] *You’ll never guess what I did this afternoon! I stripped out in the garage! I bought a wooden framed mirror at D.I. (Deseret Industries) for \$1.99. I knew it was a good mirror because of its beveled edge and when I got the decals removed from it and stripped the yellow, green, ivory and white coats of paint, I found a lovely oak frame. I removed*



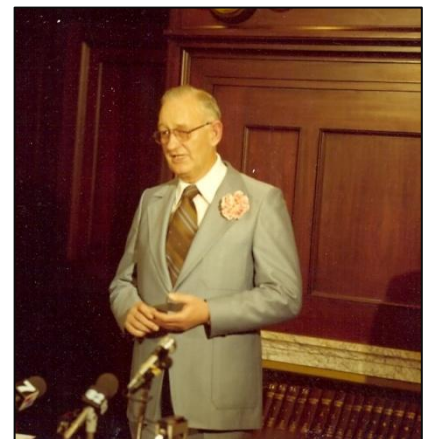
the mirror from the frame before starting to strip and on the back of it was stamped March 30, 1898. It’s fun to find these little treasures. Whenever I go to yard sales (and I’ve been known to go to one or two), I always look for the wooden articles, now wooden you?

Allan was equally amazing! He was highly respected in the community as well as in the Church and held prominent leadership positions in both throughout

his life. He had a unique ability to put forth his opinions without being intimidating or abrasive. There was a wonderful gentleness about him that was unusual in a man of his generation. He was optimistic and thought the best of others and did all he could to build others up.

He was well read, informed, and very particular about his farming practices. He had done what many thought was impossible to do; make the desert west of Blackfoot blossom through his hard work and ingenuity. His fields were clean, his farm yard organized, and he treated his hired help with respect and concern. He was a man of his word. Once he gave the following advice in a family letter:

[Allan] *Every one of us ought to learn from our mistakes. I should know for I have made plenty of them*



myself. I have gone through some real trying times. We have been frozen in and hailed out. We have been unable to pay our bills, but no one that we ever owed money had to wonder what our condition was. We always kept them informed and they always trusted us. If they hadn't we would have had to start over renting again like we did the first time. There is no substitute for honesty and trust. Each of you should live within your means and make sure that your business, whatever it is, will cash flow.

At one of the real low points of our life (financially that is) Frank Grange came down from Shelley to visit us. He said, "I hear you have been having some financial troubles." I said, "Yes, we have had some problems." He replied, "Well good; everyone has financial problems some time in their lives and you are lucky if you can have them when you're young."

Grandfather Andrew Larsen was very wealthy. He owned the drug store and a mercantile store, sheep, cattle, farms and ranges, but lost it all but his house before he died.

I was proud to be Allan's daughter-in-law and often sought him out for advice, especially regarding church and political matters. He was always kind to me and would go out of his way to make sure that my needs were met, although he wasn't one to pry or give unsolicited advice.

Our life in the labor house held many interesting experiences for us that summer. Because the house had been moved to the location, it sat on a wooden foundation which left

vacant some of the space beneath it. This sheltered place became the haunt of various animals, both wild and domestic. Invariably in the quiet of the night we could hear noises beneath and one night a pig and a dog went head to head, competing for the right to occupy the space. With only the floor boards separating us and the altercation, it was pretty exciting.

Another interesting aspect of our residence was our brass bed. It stood so high off the floor that when we would kneel for prayers each night, we had to reach up to pray and we had to literally "climb" into bed each night. Fortunately, neither of us ever fell out of bed or we might have broken some bones.

Our time on the farm involved developing some friendships with the Mexicans who worked for Dad during the summer months. Most of these people migrated from their homes in Texas to have work for the summer and then left following harvest time in the fall. Housing usually consisted of train box cars which had been converted to dwellings and were furnished with a stove and refrigerator, beds, dressers, a kitchen table and chairs. Depending on the size of family, the kitchen area doubled as a living room and even a bedroom if necessary. Our relationships with the Mexicans were always amiable. Although most of them didn't speak English and we didn't speak much Spanish, we were able to get by with a combination of

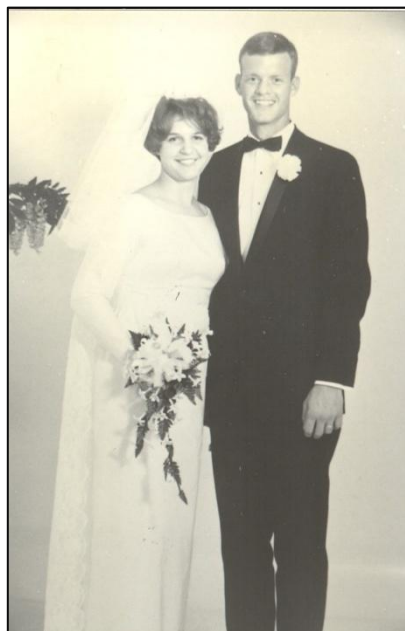
rudimentary Spanish and a lot of pantomiming.

Steve's patience with me during those first months (and years) of our



marriage was admirable. I had spent my pre-marriage years so busy with activities and work that I hadn't given much thought to developing my homemaking skills. One of my first cooking disasters was a frozen pizza that I left in the oven too long and when we sat down to our meal and Steve took his first bite, he commented, "This pizza tastes like a potato chip!" Upon seeing the dismayed look on my face, he quickly added, "But I love potato chips!"

One of my first attempts at a fancy meal was a flop, too. I had purchased a round steak and planned to use it for our Sunday dinner. Round steak was one of the favorite meats that my mother fixed for our families' Sunday dinners and so I felt confident that it would be a treat for us as well. Upon arriving home from our Sunday meetings, I placed the steak in a heated and oiled skillet, browned it on both sides, cooked it for a few minutes until the pink inside was gone and we sat down to eat. The first bite proved to be chewy and tough! What a disappointment! I hurriedly called my mother for advice and she informed me that round steak had to be browned and then slow cooked for a long time until the meat was tenderized. This experience was just one of many that required Steve's long-suffering.



It would have been less intimidating if Steve's mother hadn't been so capable. But, despite being raised in a home where everything was orderly and

organized, Steve never criticized me or made me feel inadequate. He was patient and understanding and put up with a lot of years of trial and error in my domestic endeavors.

On July 1, 1966 Steve's brother, Gary, married Linda Lamprecht in the Idaho Falls Temple.

Part way through our first summer as newlyweds, we took a trip to Provo to secure housing for fall semester. Whereas we had both felt so at home at Ricks College, BYU was intimidating. Initially we applied to be dorm parents on campus, but following a disappointing interview, we realized that we would not be offered a position and so we started checking on other possibilities, our overriding concern being cost.

Although we had been prayerful about finding an apartment, the only place we found was a dingy basement rental in southwest



Provo. It cost \$60\mo and Steve felt like we should take it. It was dark and the ceilings were so low that Steve couldn't even stand up straight in the kitchen. For a lack of anything better, we paid our deposit and returned to Blackfoot very disappointed. Little did we realize that by renting this apartment the Lord had opened the way for our housing needs to be met in the financially taxing years ahead.

BYU HERE WE COME! (September '66)

As the summer drew to a close we made plans to leave for BYU. We rented a U-Haul trailer, loaded our desk, cedar chest, and clothes, and bid everyone good-bye. We had managed to

save enough for tuition and books but Steve needed to find a part-time job. After checking on various possibilities, the employment center on campus notified us that there was an opening at the Smith Field House issuing uniforms on Saturdays for a 14-hour shift. It paid \$1.25 an hour. (The joke around campus was, "How do you become a millionaire working for BYU? Work one million hours!")

I took in ironing and did babysitting for several wards in the area during their week-day Relief Society meetings. Between us we made about \$100 a month. Money was tight and we survived by eating potatoes from the Larsen's farm and vegetables that I canned from my mother's garden the previous summer.



Our first Sunday in Provo we learned that we were members of the BYU 55th Ward with Ed Pinegar as bishop. Steve was called to be Elder's quorum president and I was called to be a Relief Society teacher. It was my first experience teaching and I thoroughly enjoyed it. We had many special friends in the ward who shared our student status. It was especially enjoyable for me since I wasn't a student at the "Y" and my

BYU experience was mainly one provided through my ward associations and activities.

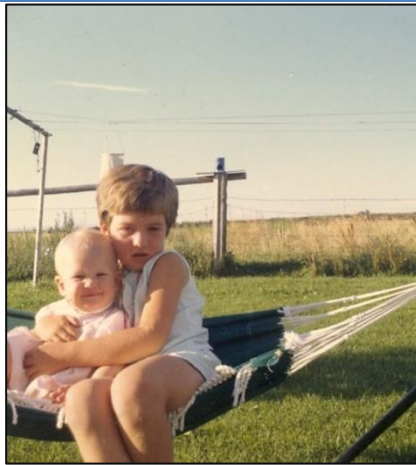
Stephani was born on December 4th, 1966, just nine months to the day after we were married. We had planned to go to Idaho for Christmas and we wanted her a few weeks old before we made the trip. The doctor suggested that I drink castor oil to induce labor since, according to his calculations, she was a week overdue. He told me to pour a whole bottle of castor oil in a cup of orange juice and drink it. We couldn't afford juice so I used milk instead. It was so yucky!

I tried to plan so that I would go into labor about the time that Steve arrived home at 8:30 p.m. from his Saturday job. Well, I waited and waited and no pains. Steve got home and we wondered what to do.

About ten o'clock I had one big intense pain that nearly did me under. I rushed to the bathroom and got on the toilet. It felt like my whole insides were flowing out. In the meantime, Steve ran upstairs to consult with our neighbors, Margaret and Warner Woodworth, who were old pros at this baby thing. Within minutes of going to the bathroom, I felt the most intense desire to bear down and Steve yelled up to Margaret that I felt like bearing down. Margaret came running down and informed us that the sooner we could get to the hospital the better! It was a wild ride and the minute we arrived at the hospital I was wheeled into delivery while Steve checked me in. I had the baby before he finished the paperwork.

Stephani arrived a few minutes after midnight, 8 and ½ pounds and healthy. It was an exciting and exhilarating experience. Steve made some phone calls notifying the new grandparents in Idaho (the first grandchild on both sides) and then he went home to bed. The Woodworth's heard him arrive and presumed that I had been sent home until my labor got more serious. When Steve informed them that I had already

given birth, Margaret just shook her head and sighed, "It's not fair!" Her firstborn had taken over 20 hours to deliver! I was so new to the whole process that I really didn't appreciate what an easy time I had. In years to come, I would look back on that delivery with envy.



In those days, new mothers had a 3-4 day hospital stay. Sometime during my stay we had the first snowfall of the winter season and I remember sitting in my hospital bed holding Stephani and thinking about Christmas and the story of the nativity. It took on new meaning for me that year.

[Steve] *Our firstborn was delivered on December 4th, 1966. That Christmas meant more to me than any Christmas before. I could take that little infant in my arms and know that Susan and Heavenly Father and I had become partners in creation. Here was someone that was a part of me and yet separate. Someone that I loved more than myself. Elder Packer said, "Through this loving one more than you love yourself, you become truly Christian. Then you know, as few others know, what the word "father" means when it is spoken of in the scriptures. You may then feel something of the love and concern that He has for us." His love and concern was so great that He gave us the Greatest Gift of all—the Atonement.*

It might be of interest to know that the cost for Dr. Scott Wallace who delivered Stephani, was \$150. The day after I got home from the hospital my mother arrived from Shelley to help me get adjusted to my new role as mother. My first impression when she walked through the door was to hand her the baby and say, "Here; you are the mother. Please take care of this baby." I didn't feel like a mother and my stitches hurt!

Mom only stayed a couple of days but she helped me organize the baby's things and taught me how to bathe her. I had been attending La Leche League meetings so that I could nurse, but Stephani cried and cried those first few days and Mother suspected that I didn't have enough milk to satisfy her. Mom got a breast pump and proceeded to pump the milk but

when we only got about 1½ ounce over a several hour period, Mom said that whether I had taken the nursing classes or not, I did not have milk enough to nurse. We got some bottles and formula and soon Stephani was sleeping much better and was more contented. Someone loaned us a baby bassinet and some nighties and we were in business!

[January 29, 1967: Mom] *Last week we got a \$300 loan for Steve's tuition and books and a \$100 insurance payment. What we'll ever do for food and rent money is still a mystery. Steve says we must have faith so we're doing our best. The Lord is really blessing us. We have started using our welfare supply and cut our grocery bill to \$4.00 a week. We are also going to take Brigham's advice and eat only two meals a day (it's supposed to be better for your health.) I'm sure the way will be made known to us and we'll*



survive second semester fine.

It might be of interest to note that during these “lean” years many of our friends who shared our student and married status suggested that we would qualify for food stamps, which were a part of the federal governments programs for assisting persons whose yearly wage was below the poverty level. We went to Allan for advice and the following letter arrived: *As to advise you what to do about the stamp plan, I can only tell you what President Clark told me when I was a young man—never to accept any government gratuities. That has been an important part of my training, but the picture is changing. Many of the measures we approve here in the legislature are for the sole purpose of matching federal funds. Senator Beal, with whom I live, shakes his head and says, “Allan I just don’t know where we are heading in all this.”*

I ask him the question you asked me about food stamps and he gave me this advice: “Tell him to ask his stake president.” I thought this to be facetious at first but I realize on second thought that he is probably closer and more conversant with the problem than we are.

It was during these early years of marriage that I



began to have opportunities to do some public speaking. I entered a stake speech contest and, to my surprise, won first place. It seemed like that was the beginning of my opportunities to speak at all kinds of events. Sometimes Steve and I were asked to speak together on husband/wife topics but usually I spoke alone. The topics varied; success in marriage, womanhood,

time management, communication, education, and gospel topics. These opportunities were always enjoyable although I would spend hours in preparation. They were a nice break for me from the routine of caring for little ones.

I did this for many years sometimes with as many as two speaking engagements a month. I would speak at Standard Nights, New Beginnings, Youth conferences, Women’s seminars, Relief Society homemaking meetings, and to various youth groups. When I was invited to speak I would ask the person, “What do you want taught?” and then I would find a unique way to get across that message. It was such a source of satisfaction and I guess you could say, it was one of my gifts.

One evening, towards the end of the school year, some friends in the ward invited us to their home for dinner. Following dinner they approached us about assuming their responsibilities as managers of their apartment building since they were graduating and leaving Provo. The owner of the building, Mr. Moser, had given them the task of finding their replacement and they felt like we would do a good job.

We were overjoyed! We could live in the apartment building rent free while we worked as managers, and we would also have opportunities to earn a little extra money when tenants left and the apartments needed cleaning or painting.



It was such a blessing for us in the ensuing five years while Steve completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

One sweet experience that we had while in Provo was sharing our college years with Gordon and Anne Dawe, who Steve had taught and baptized in England while serving his mission. When Steve taught them they were a young couple with two small children. Shortly after they joined the Church they made the decision to immigrate to the United States. Gordon was already a licensed electrician, but he enrolled as a student at BYU and they moved to Provo. His wife, Anne, was such a sweetheart and we all became fast friends. Gordon immediately got into the building trade in the area and was soon running a thriving business. They eventually had nine children and raised them all in the Church. We kept touch with them long after we left Provo and received Christmas cards from them for many years.

SUMMER OF '67: BACK ON THE FARM

The summer of '67 was a difficult one for me. I was pregnant and sick and toting around Stephani who was six months old. The move from Provo back to the farm was stressful and soon after we arrived, I threatened to miscarry. It was a scary thought that I might lose the baby and it made me grateful when I was able to weather the difficulty and life settled down. But, while living in the labor house had been an adventure for the two of us the summer before, it now became more difficult with a baby in the mix.

Stephani slept in a crib in our bedroom and many nights we left the windows open for ventilation. After one such



THE 1967 WOMAN OF THE YEAR at Ricks College is Laurie Sanders of Rapid City, S.D., who is being crowned by the 1966 winner, Mrs. Steve Lars (Susan Richards). At left is Marilyn Schwartz of Weston, runner-up. At right is the other runner-up, Barbara Haupt of Waterloo, Iowa. Miss Sanders was crowned at the special assembly during Women's Week.

night I noticed that she was covered with red spots and I assumed that she had a case of the chicken pox. I phoned Mom and described the bumps, but Mom said it didn't sound like chicken pox to her because there wasn't the little white head on the red spots. Upon further examination we discovered that the red spots were mosquito bites that she received from the mosquitoes coming in the open window at night!

One Sunday morning as I was getting Stephani and me ready to catch our ride to Sunday School with Ida Bingham, I heard a strange buzzing sound. I could tell that it was originating in the storage room and upon investigation I discovered that there was an enormous mass of bees swarming in that room. They were flying in and out of an open window and around the back

door of the house. I didn't know what to do and Steve was at priesthood meeting so I waited until Ida Bingham drove up and then I made a mad dash for her car with Stephani in my arms. By the time we returned from church a couple of hours later the bees were gone and we never had trouble with them again.



[August, 1967: Mom] Well, our

summer is almost over and soon we'll be back in Provo. Time does fly so quickly it's almost scary. Stephani is crawling, standing, saying da-da, ma-ma, and bye bye. She can almost wave when Stephen leaves for work. He is still putting in such long hours I sometimes think he does the work of three men. He's been combining grain these last few days and he comes home covered with chaff and grain dust most of the time. Oh, for a bath tub! I did heat up some water the other night and poured it into our round tub for him to sit in. He looks so darling sitting there with his long legs sprawling over the sides. If it weren't for the principle of modesty, I'd take a few pictures to show our children in future years.

As harvest time drew near, Steve took Stephani and me to Provo to start the manager's job and he returned to help his father complete the grain harvest. I was only in Provo about 10 days without him but I remember how lonely I felt. It was the last time we lived apart for more than a couple of weeks.

APARTMENT MANAGERS (August '67-June '71)

Although at the time we took the manager's job we were in BYU 55th Ward, during that first summer the ward was divided. When we arrived back in the fall of '67 we were members of the BYU 64th Ward with Kenneth Weight as bishop. At first we were disappointed but we soon learned to love our new ward.

The first week we were there Steve was called to be the second counselor in the bishopric. He was ordained a High Priest by the stake president, William R. Siddoway. His line of authority is as follows: William R. Siddoway;



Henry D. Moyle; George Albert Smith; Joseph F. Smith; Brigham Young; Joseph Smith; Peter, James and John; the Lord Jesus Christ.

When he was set apart President Siddoway told Steve that during my long and lonely hours while he was away with bishopric work, that I would be tutored by the angels in my gospel study. We didn't have a television for the first three years of our married life and each night after I would get

the little ones to bed, I would read and study the gospel. One of the books I especially enjoyed was "Jesus the Christ" by Talmage.

As managers of the apartment building we cleaned the hallways and yard, collected rent each month, answered the phone in regards to vacancies, and did repairs. When an apartment was empty we did carpet cleaning and general clean-up. If this included painting or extensive repairs, we were paid by the hour for our work. Steve's ability to fix things really came in handy.

The building was fairly new and had 12 units which required little





upkeep. Of course in the summer the yard work required additional time and effort. This job enabled me to remain in the home but still help out financially. There was a washer and dryer on the basement level so that I didn't need to spend time or money at the Laundromat. All in all it was a very good situation for us. Steve would eventually get his Master's degree so we had the job for a little over four years.

Our experiences in the apartment house gave us exposure to many different kinds of people. Most were not LDS since the apartments were several miles from campus and not approved

housing for BYU students. The experience really opened our eyes to a whole different set of values and lifestyles.

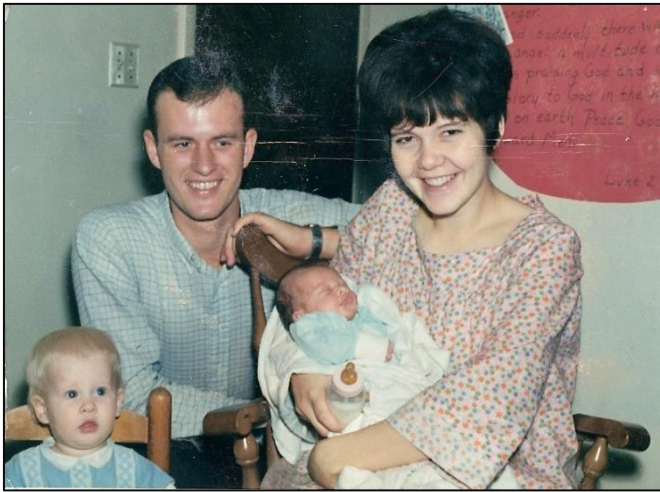
One fellow had lived there since the building was first constructed. He was a veteran of the Second World War and was an alcoholic. His wife and daughter left him and he was living alone. When he was

drinking he would spend his days lying on the couch in the living room watching television. His apartment was a terrific mess.

One time when this fellow arrived home without the key to his apartment and we weren't there to let him in, he kicked his door down. Another time when he was going on a trip I offered to thoroughly clean his apartment in order to earn a little money. He agreed but wasn't too willing. I soon discovered why. Over the years all the appliances in his apartment had broken down and even the toilet wasn't working. He was using

the back bedroom closet as a bathroom in an emergency and he never cooked or ate meals at home. It was such a horrendous mess that I became physically sick and couldn't do much to clean it up. When we realized how bad his apartment was,





we told the owner, Mr. Moser. He said to just let him stay and that when he moved out we would deal with the mess.

Despite his faults, he was very generous with us and many times would give us things he had ordered through the mail but decided he didn't want or need. Our first Christmas in Provo he gave us two brown leather-like jackets that he had gotten from a company named Fingerhut. They were the only gifts under our tree that year for Steve and I and we appreciated his goodness.

When we left Provo and our manager's job he was still living in his apartment but we received word some time later that he had been found dead on his couch. His drinking problem had finally gotten the best of him.

Another tenant was a woman whose husband was serving in the Vietnam War. She had one little boy and soon after moving into the apartment she started frequenting the local bars. She started stepping out on her husband and continued until he arrived home from the war. I figured that the minute he realized what she had been doing their marriage would be over. But, although I think he knew it, he moved back



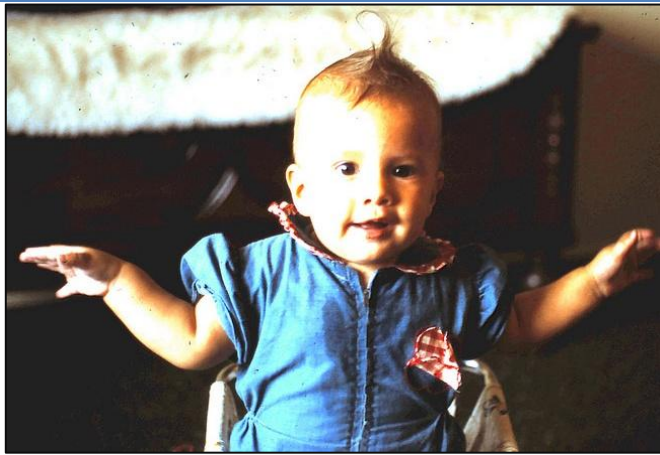
in and they carried on as husband and wife. I guess their philosophy was "all is fair in love and war." Anyway, as I became acquainted with him I suspected that he hadn't been any more faithful to her than she had to him.



Another family that rented from us was newly arrived from China. Of course, they couldn't speak English and that complicated things for all of us. Part way through their occupancy we discovered that they weren't using any of the appliances. They had a small open flame burner and were cooking everything on it. This was creating all kinds of problems with soot on the walls and when they finally left we had a major job cleaning and painting the apartment to get it ready for other occupants. These were just a few of the problems we dealt with every day. It really opened our eyes to the challenges of being a landlord.

Many times we felt the Lord's blessings to us financially. On one occasion as we tried to figure out how we would pull together the funds to pay tuition, we received a check from my brother, Charles, in the mail. It was such a kind act and I cried tears of gratitude for his generosity to us in our time of need.

[November 6, 1967: Grandma Ilene] *As you see Charles has sent a check of \$150 to you. He was going to put this amount in the bank in savings for his future schooling. Stephen, he figures you're as good an investment and as safe a place as the bank, so he would like you to accept it at this time as a long-term loan.*



He doesn't expect to need it until he comes back from his mission in five or six years. He figures he can save enough to get him into his first year of school and outfit himself for his mission. When he comes home from his mission is when he will need the money. I'm sure in order to get himself through medical school as he plans now, he'll need to do a little borrowing himself and will feel more like asking for help if he has helped a little himself. He's kept enough in his checking account to see him through until summer and he can work again. He's happy he has a little to loan you at this time. Dad and I feel so bad to think none of our investments are paying off at this time so we can assist you. We'd love to do it and hope we can before your schooling is over. God bless you all. We love you so much. Kiss my baby for me. Love, Mother, Dad, and family.

[July 31, 1968: Mom's Journal] Steve's work and church job plus his schooling took him from home so much, but I was so busy that the time flew by quickly. We had another little girl born to us on November 28th. We called her Shauntel. She is as dark as Stephani is light. It was a little bit hard on Stephani at first but so was it on all of us.



Babies, babies everywhere it seemed and hardly a moment to think. Now Stephani is 21 months old and Shauntel is eight months. Shauntel is crawling all over and into everything. She is really a lovely baby although she seems to have been sick since the day she was born. We take her in monthly for gamma globulin shots. Stephani has been well through it all, thank goodness. We have really had some wild times though.

When summer came we decided to stay here and work and keep our manager's job. Steve works 40 hours a week watering at Provo High School and 35 hours in the P.E.

equipment shop. We are trying to pay off our debts and get enough to start us into the coming semester.



Steve was not accepted into a medical school so consequently we are investigating other avenues for post graduate work. We are thinking seriously about the MBA program. It would take two years following graduation and they would place Steve

in a business as an administrator. He has a natural knack for working with people and perhaps this is the area where he would best fit.

At the beginning of this summer I was called to be Relief Society president. This has kept me going, but has been enjoyable, too.

[March 23, 1969: Dad's journal] Saturday was the usual long 14 hours of work at

the physical education department issue room beginning at 6:00 a.m. Was able to leave for a couple of hours to do my janitor work at Provo High that I wasn't able to do the day before because of the temple trip. And then at 8:00 p.m. when I closed up shop, had to hurry home to change clothes and take Sue to the ward Gold and Green Ball. It was the first dance we had been to for a year. The Alumni House was decorated around the theme of St. Patrick's Day with a large tree made of crepe paper streamers in the center of the floor and forming the false ceiling.

The following letter arrived from Barbara reassuring us of her love and confidence that whatever Steve chose to do, it would be fine with them: **[Barbara]** Dearest Steve, We have the greatest admiration for you for the things you are doing and what you've been able to accomplish along with the help of your capable wife. You said you hoped we wouldn't be too disappointed if you didn't make it to medical school. Our only disappointment will be what you feel. If you don't pursue a medical career, I'm sure you'll find something else that will bring joy and satisfaction to you. You have already fulfilled your dreams: an honorable, clean life, a fruitful mission, a temple marriage to a choice girl, a fine father, continued service in the Church, an example to all who know you. What more could parents ask for except for your happiness in your chosen work, whatever that may be. May God bless and help you. You have our



love and blessings with you always. Love, Mother.

As graduation approached he applied and was accepted into the MBA program. He finished up his Bachelor's degree on May 29, 1969 and we looked forward to his upcoming graduate program that fall.

When he was accepted it was with the stipulation that he would not work while in the program because it was intense and challenging. This presented a problem for us, but we soon decided to get a student loan to help us finish the last two years of school. Steve received a position as Dean's assistant and that helped out with finances, too. It may be of interest to the reader to know that Steve received \$90 a month for his work as an assistant and that our payment for managing the apartment house was that we could live in one of the apartments rent free. Just getting our rent free was such a boon.

During the years that we lived in Provo my father would sometimes come to Utah for business with the U&I Sugar Company. The company would reimburse him for the expenses of his trip and he would stay the night with us instead of getting a hotel. Before he would leave the next morning,

he would give me a check for the amount he had saved by staying with us instead of at a hotel. I'm sure our couch wasn't nearly as comfortable as a motel would have been but we appreciated his thoughtfulness and sensitivity to our needs.

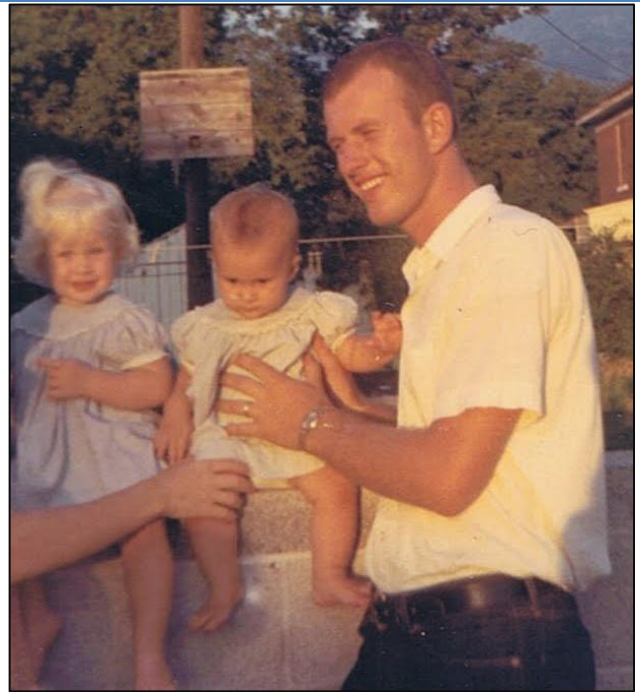
Another benefit of his visits was that I usually had some



one-on-one time with him after the babies were in bed. On one such occasion just after Steve received his last rejection notice from a medical school, I was bemoaning our situation. Daddy listened to me and then made the comment, "Would it be so bad to have the life style that Mum and I have had?" It made me stop and analyze my feelings. I quickly realized that I wanted Steve to be a doctor so that we could have more of the worldly things that would come from that profession. I appreciated his gentle chastisement and counsel.

I always appreciated that Mom and Dad shared their parenting expertise with me. The following letter was received following a visit by my mother: **[Grandma Ilene]** *"My Dearest Susan, This letter is just for you. I had such little time to visit with you and tell you how proud I am of the wonderful little mother that you are. You and Steve are such good parents. Just strict enough that your beautiful little daughters are learning obedience wonderfully well for their age and patient enough that they live in a world of love and security. I realized more than ever while I was there this time how very choice you are and how very blessed I have been to have had the privilege to bear and rear you. I felt for you when you were sick and wished I could do something for you and it brought back memories of days that were hard to face because of the work that had to be done and being too ill to accomplish it all. (I had morning sickness). May I thank you for the confidence you showed in me in the pre-existence when you chose me as your mother."*

Following this sweet introduction she gave me some counsel on night potty-training Stephani and



Shauntel. She had read an article about it and shared with me some of the things that she had done to help her children go all night without wetting the bed. I tried to do the things she suggested. Her advice was invaluable to me throughout the years as she tutored me in my role as a young mother.

That year, as Relief Society president in our college ward, was a time of growth and learning. I felt the Lord's sustaining influence with me as I performed my many duties. Following my year as president, I was called to serve as a counselor in the BYU Fourth Stake Relief Society presidency to Stella Oaks. This opportunity to work with Sister Oaks was one of the highlights of my college days. She was a very spiritual woman and had a tremendous influence on me at that impressionable time of my life. She became a close friend, mentor, and role model and she kept in touch with me for many years after we left



Provo.

During my final year as her counselor, her son, Dallin H. Oaks, was called to be the president of BYU and she shared many sweet stories with those of us on her Relief Society stake board about his life and preparation for that calling. I have since written my memories of Stella, at the request of Elder Oaks, and submitted them to the Oaks family for use if and when the family publishes a history of her life. Following is an excerpt from my letter to them:

Dear Elder Oaks,

Writing about your mother has been an enjoyable yet difficult assignment. The years I spent as her counselor were full of growth and discovery for me; she touched my life in so many ways and had a tremendous influence upon my thinking. I recall telling her once that aside from my own mother, she had had a greater impact upon my life than any other woman.

We held our presidency meetings in her home around the dining room table. Some evenings as I would arrive, she would grab my arm and say, "Oh, Sue, you've just got to have a copy of these things I've run off!" She'd take me to the far end of the dining room and hand me copies of handouts she was going to be using at her next presentation. Then she would visit with me about her upcoming assignments. She was full of energy and



excitement about her work and open about her gratitude for the gifts she possessed that enabled her to give such service.

Our weekly presidency meetings were enjoyable and effective. We would talk of the items on the agenda. Sister Oaks expected and accepted our suggestions. She was full of wisdom and insight, but never intimidating. Assignments were made. We would leave the meeting lifted, motivated and with a long list of "to do's". I never doubted that she needed me and

valued my contributions. She provided the maturity and direction, we provided the willing hands. One time in the middle of an enormous project, the question came into my mind, "Why am I willing to work so hard for Sister Oaks?" The answer was easy. "Because I loved her so much!"

When I served as a ward president, I relished the time with her at stake leadership. As we dismissed to our departments, we would follow her into a classroom designated for the presidents. She would sit in a desk and motion

for us to gather 'round. We'd question her, exchange ideas, sometimes complain. She'd share insights, counsel, and encouragement. We'd go home motivated, inspired, filled! She led with warmth that never left us wondering as to her concern for us.

I recall a time when I handled a ward situation poorly. I sought her counsel as I tearfully explained the details. She listened and



then responded, "Oh, Sue, the mechanics of the thing are easy. It's those human relations that will get you every time!"

She stressed, "A woman's realm is one of influence." She also said, "Don't apologize for sharing personal experiences.

They are effective in teaching and should be shared."

It was a source of joy to me that she would take time to form a relationship not only with me but also with Steve and my little ones. She was always interested in how we were doing and she reached out to us in sweet acts of kindness. When my twins were born, she arrived on my doorstep with two beautiful hand-knitted ponchos. They were for my older children, Stephani, three, and Shauntel, two. She sensed that with the arrival of two new babies, the older ones might feel slighted. Her gift to them brought delighted squeals, but perhaps more importantly, acted as a gentle reminder to a weary young mother that I must not forget to find time for all four little ones.

The most valuable lesson Stella taught me had to do with my relationships with family members. Someone close to me had done something that disappointed and hurt me. Not wanting the incident broadcast, yet needing to express my feelings, I sought out Sister Oaks. She listened as I shared my burden. Then taking my hands in hers and looking me squarely in the eye, she said, "Now we shall see. You loved him when you thought he was perfect. Now we shall see if your love is strong enough to love him when you know he is not perfect." The incident has long since been put to rest but the counsel she gave me lives on. I use it every day as I find myself interacting with family and friends and feeling the normal



frustrations and disappointments that come in interpersonal relationships. When I find myself withholding my love because I see imperfections, I remind myself, "You loved them when you thought they were perfect. Is your love strong enough to love them now that you know they are not perfect?"

My favorite memento from Sister Oaks is a delicate lace handkerchief. Just a short while before we left Provo I was at her home. She led me into her bedroom. There she opened her bottom dresser drawer and showed me an assortment of beautiful handkerchiefs. "I want you to have one of these to remember me by. Choose which one you like." I knew they had been gifts to her over the years and I felt honored that she would part with one. I selected one and have it still today. As cherished as the handkerchief was the short note she wrote. "Sue, It has been a great joy to me and all the Relief Society Board to work with you through this year. You have a rare quality of leadership mingled with moving spirituality, steadfast persistence. I marvel at your creative ability. I hope you will never fully disappear from my life. I love you so." Signed, "Sister Oaks."

May 23, 1969

After mailing my account to President Oaks I received notes from him and each of his siblings thanking me for taking time to write my memories.

Of course, my time in the stake Relief Society presidency was in addition to my duties as a landlord and a busy young mother of two toddlers. An account written in my journal tells of some frightening experiences I had.

[July, 1969: Mom's journal]

Stephani and a little neighbor girl decided to go for a jaunt last February and took off for the park. I thought they were still over to the neighbors and she thought they were here. When we discovered they were neither place, we frantically began our search. We ran to all the nearby stores, checked ditches, back yards, yelled up and down the blocks, and finally called the police. Apparently a lady had seen them over in the park and noticed that they were awfully small to be alone so long and she had called the police. The police picked them up and took them to the station and they had been playing there ever since. What a day that was!

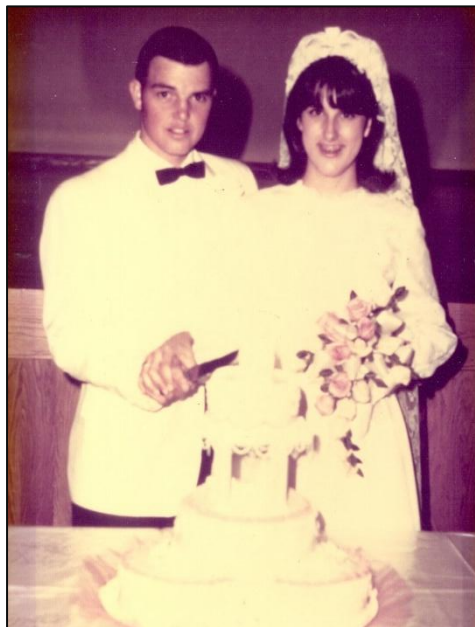
But it proved to be only the beginning. A week later Stephani climbed up to the medicine cabinet and took some special diet pills of mine. After discovering this several hours later, we rushed her to the hospital and they gave her shots to slow her down. The pills made her hyper-active and she stayed wide awake all night and until 4 p.m. the next day. She couldn't hold still for three seconds and she was biting her little fingers so badly from nervousness that we had to completely tape her hands. By the next evening she was relatively normal again but while getting her settled down to bed, disaster struck again. Shauntel fell and cut a slit right above her eye and we had to



rush her to the hospital for stitches. We hardly dared move for days after that, afraid lest another accident occur.

It was in June that we had another scare. We were returning from sacrament meeting and I was sitting by Steve holding Shauntel. Stephani was sitting by the door. We stopped at a light and then proceeded to make a left hand turn. As we made the turn, Stephani accidentally pulled on the door handle and the door flew

open. All the cars in the intersection honked and tried to let us know what was happening. As the door flew open, Stephani flew with it--hanging on as we made the corner. She hung onto the car door and didn't let go until we had the car stopped and I was lifting her back onto the front seat. She was badly shaken and her knees were scratched where she had been dragged along the highway, but other than that, she was fine. Us? Well, it took us a little longer to get over it!"



Today Stephani went into the hall and played a joke on me. She would ring the doorbell and then scamper up the steps to secretly watch my expression when I opened the door and found no one there. I could hear Shauntel laughing and I knew what they were up to so after a few more false alarms I hid behind the door, ready to play my own joke. I could hear Stephani tip-toe up to the door and at that moment I jumped from my

hiding spot, roaring like a lion. I thought Stephani would go into orbit. I scared her so badly that she couldn't get herself into action to escape my grasp. When she finally realized it was only Mama, she meekly said, "You scared me, mama; tell me you're sorry." "I'm sorry," I said between fits of laughter. And I guess that was all it took for in a moment we were friends again.



On April 2, 1970 my brother, Nathan was married to Maureen Allsop in the Salt Lake Temple.

While serving in the stake Relief Society presidency I became pregnant with our third child. Steve was still serving in the bishopric as first counselor (now to Bishop Lane Compton) and attending graduate school and I was busy with two pre-scholars and management of the apartment building. As the summer of '70 approached we were both anxious for time off from school and for the birth of the baby.

The pregnancy had been a difficult one for me. I

had been unusually big and we hoped that maybe the baby would arrive early. About six weeks before my due date, following my monthly exam, Dr. Wallace broke some startling news to me! He said that he thought he heard two heartbeats! He arranged an appointment for me at Utah Valley Hospital for x-rays. I went over to the hospital immediately

and I asked the technician if he could tell me the results of the x-rays. He said that I would have to get that information from my physician.

Following the x-rays, as I was getting ready to leave, the technician walked by and held up two fingers and grinned from ear-to-ear.

What a shock that news was to us! We wondered how we would ever manage—financially and otherwise. For several days I wrestled with the prospect of trying to manage with four little ones. Soon after this I was sitting in sacrament meeting and we sang the song, "Come, Come, Ye Saints." All at once the phrase

"no toil nor labor fear, but with joy wend your way" seemed to stand out in bold relief. I realized that that song wasn't just referring to the early pioneers but was written for me in my present situation. I knew that I wasn't to fear anymore but to move ahead with faith that I could accomplish whatever I was called to do.



Dr. Wallace told us to expect the twins to be born premature and so we began to prepare for their early arrival. I continued to get bigger and bigger. I could hardly walk and when I would lie down Steve would have to turn me from side to side, my stomach was so large and heavy. I had just a few outfits that still fit and most of my shoes didn't. I would rub oil on my stomach to keep it from cracking, although the stretch marks were everywhere.

I started into labor once and spent 12 hours in the hospital, only to be sent home when the labor didn't develop into anything. Finally, two days before my due date I decided to try the castor oil trick again. I choked down a bottle of it and went about my business of taking care of things at home.

That night I had a presidency meeting at Sister Oaks' home and we were going over the items on the agenda when I mentioned that I had taken castor oil several hours earlier and hopefully I would go into labor soon. Sister Oaks got the most alarmed look on her face and immediately dismissed the meeting and sent me home. Still no babies!

The next day I felt pretty miserable and I called Dr. Wallace and complained. He told me to meet him at the hospital. When I arrived and they checked me, I was in labor. Nine hours later I delivered Stephen Richards (8 lb. 6 oz) and, just 12 minutes later, David Allan (7 lb 8 oz). Both were healthy, full term, and needed no emergency care of any kind.

Steve had been waiting in the father's waiting room dressed in scrubs since the hospital had recently adopted the practice of letting the father be present for the birth. Following the birth of Stephen, I asked about Steve and Dr. Wallace apologized and sent one of the nurses to fetch him. When he arrived the doctor commented that it was a good thing that I was having two or Steve would have missed it entirely! Dr. Wallace was amazed at the size of the twins and apologized for making me go full term, carrying nearly 16 pounds of baby!



The birth of the twins was truly one of the most amazing experiences of my life and the ecstasy I felt was indescribable! They were bald, beautiful, and identical. I felt like a feather weight. Within a couple days following the birth, I lost over 50 pounds.

Since they were full term we were able to bring them home within a few days of their birth. My mother was able to come and help me recuperate and get on my feet. We had four little ones with Stephani being 3½ and Shauntel 2½. You can imagine how hectic and busy we were. We put a sign on our apartment door that read, "Babies are our business, our only business!" (a popular slogan of the day.) Of course, this was far from true for life still went on and many times it seemed overwhelming trying to take care of our many responsibilities and babies, too.

I learned to appreciate my mother more than I ever had before. Her wisdom and capacity to

organize helped secure me against the time she would leave and I would have it to do alone. She helped me set up feeding schedules and other daily tasks. Her reassuring comments and expressions of confidence gave me the courage to move ahead and find ways to cope with the daily challenges. She stayed for a week and then left for a few days and came back to help me sort out the rough spots and find a way to be able to manage.

One night, during her stay David started choking on some phlegm and Mom and I both rushed to his crib, picked him up, turned him upside down, and pounded the phlegm out. He quickly recovered and was soon sleeping again, but that incident reaffirmed that although I was feeling overwhelmed, these babies were a great gift and I wanted them both to live.

Soon after we brought the twins home, baby supplies began to arrive. Some were new, some used, but all much appreciated. One total



stranger heard of our plight and brought over an entire matched wardrobe that she had used for her own twin boys just a year earlier. Someone asked me how we could possibly afford to have twins on a student's budget and much to my surprise, as I figured out things and recounted people's goodness to us, I realized that the only thing we had purchased for them was baby formula and bottles. Who can doubt that the Lord provides for his children!



The following is a letter I received from **Grandma Gooch** at this time: *To Steve and Susan. Congratulations to you. Our hearts are filled with gratitude that all is well. May God continue to bless you both and your sweet little family. They are precious jewels. Jewels money cannot buy. Have faith in Him who sent them to you for they belong to Him and they are fresh from His presence. O Glorious thought! We love you all.*

*Did you ever look over the side of a crib And see
two little eyes of blue And two little hands so
chubby and white Two cute little ears, a tiny
little nose and a mouth puckered up to say
"Goo". What is more precious in all the wide
world Than a baby...unless it is two! Good
luck, from Grandma and Grandpa Joe*

Following my mother's extended stay with me, she went back home and her good friend, Janeal Swanson, reminded her of a dream Mother had had many years previously while she was pregnant with her last child, Lisa. Mom was having a difficult pregnancy and one night she dreamed that she was in a beautiful place where women were taking care of children. She was shown a beautiful little girl with lots of curly black hair and she understood that the baby she was carrying was going to be a little girl. (This was in the time before the invention of ultrasounds!)

Just a short time after this she noticed two little blond boys standing off in the distance and she left Lisa and started walking toward the two little boys. One of the ladies who was with her in the dream stopped her and pointing to the boys said, "These two will come later." When Mom awoke from her dream she felt strongly that she had seen her future baby girl and she related this to Janeal. She also mentioned the little boys but the years passed and they were forgotten. When Janeal heard that I had had twin identical boys, she immediately thought of the dream and mentioned it to Mom who in turn related it to me.

When I first realized that I was going to be having twins, I decided that I probably needed to be released from my stake Relief Society job. But after prayerful consideration, I felt strongly that I could carry on if I worked hard and asked for the Lord's blessing on my efforts. As time went by, I found that although Sunday visits to the various

wards were nearly impossible, I could fulfill the rest of my responsibilities and so I continued as Sister Oaks' counselor until we left BYU a year later. That responsibility and all the experiences I had over those years became a strong influence in my life. I have always been a strong supporter of Relief Society and relished the associations and things that I've learned through my membership.

[September 15, 1970: Mom's journal] *I'm alone tonight, but the silence is pleasing and comfortable. Steve is in Idaho with a semi load and won't be back until tomorrow. The children are asleep. We have four of them now. Stephani is almost four and she is such a beautiful bubbly girl. Shauntel with her deep brown eyes is approaching three and she is equally as enchanting. Then there are the twins, Stephen and David. They are nearly three months old now. How time flies. My days are busy but I think the Lord has sent angels to assist me. Each day I see my babes growing and I thrill at their accomplishments. How lucky I am. I've thought many times these last months that surely I'm the luckiest girl in the world!"*



Steve's last year of graduate school was hectic. I was serving as president of MBA Wives and that was an interesting opportunity for me to be a little more involved with him on campus. Steve continued in his bishopric work and did very well with his studies.

The twins were very sickly that first year and seemed to have more than their share of sore

throats and ear infections. We spent many sleepless nights, walking one and then the other. When they were about six months old, they got the stomach flu and couldn't seem to retain anything I fed them. I could tell they were getting dehydrated and it scared me because I remember my little sister, Lisa, going through that when she was very small and almost dying from dehydration.

After trying the doctor's prescriptions and some home remedies with no change in their condition, we turned to the Lord. Steve and a dear friend, Jim Lamph, administered to them and gradually they began to improve. I'll never forget that terrible Christmas in Provo, with them so sick, each one propped up on pillows on the couch as we opened our Christmas gifts early on Christmas morning.

[January 1, 1971: Dad's journal] *This morning I was just going to start something at my desk when Sue said something about putting the boys*



down for their naps. I realized how often, when attempting to study at home, I have been stymied in my desires because of babies sleeping in the room. So we decided to move—bedrooms, that is. It took a big share of the day to move us into the small bedroom, leaving all four kids in the other. I think it is going to work out well, though.

This evening I formulated a list of companies to write to for any job opportunities they may have, worked on school work, and then drew up some New Year's resolutions. I will keep them handy and review them often.

Following is a list of Steve's resolutions: (1) Daily scripture reading (discuss with Susan and record in journal thoughts prompted); (2) one night a month do genealogy; (3) write in journal daily; (4) update life history; (5) underline and meditate while reading; (6) file carbon copies of all letters and correspondence; (7) read Ensign monthly; (8) follow daily exercise program; (9) get a good job, set a budget, establish a savings program, pay debts from school; (10) Use time effectively and efficiently by planning and organizing as I go, acting quickly and decisively, and evaluating each night that day's activities.



The year 1971 was a tremendous challenge in many ways. I still had responsibility for the cleaning and management of the apartment house and having four little ones made it difficult for me to do much but keep up with my own home and family. Although my life was difficult, several things helped me survive the confinement, sleepless nights, and financial woes. My work in the Relief Society was a source of joy and gave me opportunity to use my talents and creativity. My commitment to honoring the Sabbath proved invaluable. Even though many tasks had to be done on the Sabbath, I did my best to use it as a rest and break from my daily routine. That effort paid dividends and kept me from depression and discouragement.

My mother had convinced me of the benefits of getting the children to bed early so that I could have some quiet time to myself each evening. Although there was a few months after the babies were born that I had a lot of night work, with some effort I was able to have the children down by 7:30 each evening and that gave me time to relax, straighten the house one last time, do my church work, and feel human again. Although the early bedtime usually meant an early morning, we were up anyway and into our day so it wasn't a problem for us.

During our years in Provo we would take monthly temple excursions to the Manti Temple. The ward would charter a bus and we would leave about 5:00 pm and return about 1:00 am. As you can imagine, this was very difficult for us as parents of a young family but these monthly trips became a highlight for us. When it was announced that there was going to be a temple built in Provo, we were elated. Soon we learned that we would be assessed



\$25 to help with the building of the temple. At the time this seemed like a huge amount but our stake presidency encouraged the students to contribute, saying that the temple would prove to be a great blessing in our lives then and in the coming years. Although we never did attend the Provo Temple as students, many years later our own children who were attending BYU frequently attended and the promises of the stake president came to fruition in our lives. When Mike was preparing for his mission, we went with him and some of our other children to the Provo temple for him to receive his own endowment. We have had a wonderful return on our \$25 investment all those years before!

Finally, after five years, four children, and two college degrees our time at the "Y" was drawing to a close. We looked forward with anticipation

for Steve's upcoming graduation from the MBA program on May 28, 1971. We were excited to finally have a full-time job with a regular wage and move on to a new phase of life.





PERSONAL RESUME OF STEPHEN A. LARSEN

550 West 200 South #8
Provo, Utah 84601

Phone 801-373-2136

Marital: Married	Birth: Dec. 8, 1943
Children: 2+	Health: Excellent
Height: 6'4"	Weight: 200 lbs.
Military: 3-A	Age: 26

BACKGROUND

Born and raised in Idaho. Worked on Father's farm until 1963. Active in Boy Scouts of America—Eagle Scout and Duty to God (Church Scouting award). Active in school athletics, clubs, musical groups, and student government. Married Susan Richards March 1966. Interested in all sports, music, reading, family, Church, and work.

EDUCATION

Graduate School:	BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Provo, Utah Master of Business Administration (a two-year graduate program) Graduate: May 1971 MBA
Under Graduate:	RICKS COLLEGE, Rexburg, Idaho BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, Provo, Utah Major: ZOOLOGY Minor: CHEMISTRY Graduated: May 1969 BS

ACTIVITIES

Ricks College—KAPPA KAPPA PSI (National Band Honor Society), DELTA PHI KAPPA (National Service Society for returned LDS missionaries), Sophomore Class President, Student Senate, Band, Choir, Orchestra.
Brigham Young University—Associated Mens Students Council, Vice-President of Pre-Med, Pre-Dent Club.

EMPLOYMENT

Brigham Young University Physical Education Department
September 1966–September 1969
Equipment repairman, issue room—working with the general public, foreman during summers of 1967 and 1968.
Provo School District (Provo High School)
January 1967–present
Began with custodial and gardening responsibilities, now handling outside rentals of facilities.
Allan F. Larsen
General farm labor, equipment operator, foreman.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon)—various leadership responsibilities, Elders Quorum President, Counsellor in Bishopric (over about 250 people).
Central British Mission—Voluntary representative for the LDS Church in England from March 1963 to April 1965.

Many months prior to Steve's graduation he began interviewing for jobs. It was interesting that the companies who showed the most interest were the ones that involved agriculture. I guess they figured, "Once a farm boy, always a farm boy." Eventually he was hired by Olsen Farms, an egg company with headquarters in California. His first job was to manage a chicken/egg farm in Mount Vernon, Washington.

MOUNT VERNON, WASHINGTON

(June '71-July 71)

[July, 1971: Mom's journal] *The girls are now 4 ½ and 3 ½ and the twins are 13 months. What a handful! Steve graduated May 29th with his MBA. What a glorious day for us! We've been married now for five years and known nothing but school. That's a good life but as our family has grown we are grateful to complete this important chapter of our life. BYU is a fantastic school. We owe it a great deal. Both sets of parents came for graduation and helped us complete our move. Late Friday night Steve drove the U-Haul to Moreland to pick up our wedding gifts, many of which we had never seen. I took the four little ones and went with Mom and Dad to Kathy's in Salt Lake for the night.*

And so we moved—leaving behind our apartment house, our college days, and many friends. As we left Provo I glanced back and began to cry. Not that I was sad to go but because I knew that this phase of our life was drawing to a close and a new one was on the horizon. We'd done it—with the Lord's help: gone to school, had our family, and kept me in the home where I belonged. Each step of the way we knew the Lord had sustained, guided, and protected.

My parents were real troopers in helping us move. Traveling with four preschoolers is a challenge under the best of circumstances, but as usual, the twins were sick and hard to handle. I had never been to the area around Seattle, and

the further west and north we traveled, the more beautiful the scenery became. I was enchanted with the green foliage and lush countryside. My Dad kept saying, "It will get more beautiful still!" He was right. When we finally arrived in Mt. Vernon, it was absolutely amazing. There was so much lush greenery that the cattle in the fields just sat and munched on the grass surrounding them instead of walking along grazing like they have to do in Utah and Idaho.

After my folks helped us get moved in and settled, they left and we began to familiarize ourselves with the area and the farm that Steve would manage. Olsen Farms was in the process of buying out an egg farmer named Dick Wick whose farm was on the outskirts of Mount Vernon. A home on the farm was a part of our compensation package and we quickly made ourselves comfortable. We fell in love with the area and the fine people in the ward. On Steve's days off we would tour the area.

On Memorial Day my folks came and we decided to go to the coast and take a ferry boat ride to Victoria and through the San Juan Islands. We had the double stroller which held the twins and Stephani and Shauntel in tow. With the help of Mom and Dad we boarded the ferry and walked the deck taking in the beauty of the Puget Sound and the ocean. Part way to Victoria, the ferry docked at a small island and we all got off to explore. Before the ferry left, the captain came onto the beach where we were all standing and asked us if we had really intended to get off the ferry. He said that it would be several hours before another boat would be by to pick us up and he asked if we were prepared for such a lengthy wait? All we had with us was one very small diaper bag and nothing in the way of food for the rest of us. We immediately got back on the ferry and continued on to our destination. We felt a little foolish but grateful that he had

been sensitive to our situation and willing to take time to advise us of our options.

MOVING AGAIN (JULY '71)

Six weeks after our arrival in Mt. Vernon we were informed that the owner of the egg farm had decided against selling and so we were transferred to Hagerman, Idaho to manage the farm there. Since we had just used the help of my parents to move us to Mt.

Vernon, we were determined to make the move back on our own. We rented a U-Haul truck and devised a plan whereby I could care for the children in the back of the truck and Steve could do the driving. Not only did we have children ages 4,3,1,1, but we had also acquired a beautiful little white Samoyed Husky puppy that accompanied us to our new home in Idaho.

We carefully packed our limited furnishings in the front part of the rental truck and set up a little room in the back part which included a large area rug, two cribs for the twins, a rocking chair for me and toys for the kids to play with en route. In order for us to have air and light, we rolled the back overhead door of the truck up a few inches and secured it with twine. I sat in my chair, played with the kids and dog, and we rode along merrily on our way. We started out early in the day and assumed that in not too many hours we would arrive at Zillah and spend the night with my parents.

Not too many miles down the road our troubles began. The truck wasn't running properly and every time we came to a hill, it would only go about 30 m/p/h. Since the area outside of



Seattle was full of hills this became a major setback. We crept along.

Another problem with this was that when the truck was going so slowly the exhaust fumes curled around and back up into the small crack under the roller door. At first I didn't realize what was going on but all at once the back filled with fumes. I imagined the worst and visualized Steve driving along and eventually stopping to check on us only to find us all

asphyxiated. I decided that somehow I had to let Steve know that we were in trouble. I climbed up on the furnishings at the front of the truck bed and pounded as hard as I could to get his attention.

He couldn't hear me over the noise of the truck. I panicked and wondered what to do. I spotted a mop on top of the furniture and climbed up to retrieve it. I then lied down on the braided rug in our makeshift room and carefully pushed the mop head under the door and out into the area where Steve could see it in his rear view mirror. Within a few seconds he saw the waving mop and pulled over, opened the back of the van, and rescued us. For the remainder of the trip to Zillah we all crowded into the cab of the van. The problems with the U-Haul continued and we arrived 12 hours later at our destination.

The second day of our trip was equally traumatic. It was one of the hottest days of that summer and temperatures reached into the high 90's. Imagine what it was like for us riding in the back of the moving van with no ventilation except the small air space under the door and a tiny light bulb in the center of the truck for light. As the

day heated up, we sweltered. We decided to buy some crushed ice and the babies and I sucked on ice as we rode along. Whenever we felt like we couldn't take the heat any longer, Steve would stop at a rest area and we would all head for the water fountains and water ourselves down. Steve and David wore only a diaper and so we hosed them down to keep them cooled off. Even the dog relished the frequent rest stops and chance to take a break from the heat.



The trip was long and hot and exhausting (no pun intended) and it was with relief that we pulled into Boise late the second night of travel and found a motel for the night. The next day we arrived in Blackfoot. I'm sure we were a sorry sight to Barbara and Allan when we arrived after that marathon of a trip from Washington. Their willingness to help us get through that ordeal and provide us with food and lodging for the next two weeks was an act of compassion that I have often

thought of and appreciated more as the years have gone by.

The second day we were delayed by road construction between Washington and Boise. The lengths of baler twine which held the overhead door in place were strained each time we went over a bump. Once during an especially bad stretch of construction, the twine broke with a snap and the overhead door went rolling up, leaving us without any back wall to our small room. In that second I imagined the two cribs rolling out of the back of the van and onto the road.

Quickly I instructed the children to sit perfectly still and stay away from the open doorway while I signaled Steve with the infamous mop. Upon seeing the "red flag" he quickly pulled to a hasty stop only to find us safe but dangerously perched by the open end of the moving van. We deemed it a miracle that all of us had not been thrown out the back and into oncoming traffic. Again we joined Steve in the cab until we passed the construction area and were on smooth roads again.

The summer of 1971 was a busy one for Barbara for other reasons as well as helping us to get moved and settled. On July 30th Steve's brother, Stafford, married Kathleen Jane Wakefield, and Barbara and Allan hosted the festivities at their home in Moreland.

Then on September 3rd Steve's sister Jeanie married Dayne Scott Gentry in the Idaho Falls Temple.

MAKING BUHL OUR HOME (1971-1973)

The Monday after arriving in Blackfoot, Barbara babysat the children while Steve and I drove to the Hagerman area to look for housing. The egg farm and plant where Steve would work were in Hagerman Valley but housing was so limited that we looked in many of the surrounding towns for anything that would be adequate for our growing family. Rental units were in short supply but we did find a house on the outskirts of Buhl which was for sale and was about the size we were

looking for. We didn't have any money for a down payment, but the president of Olsen Farms was willing to loan us money for it. We made an offer on the house and within a day it was accepted and we made plans to move in. It was truly an answer to prayer (both ours and Barbara's, I'm sure) that we were able to locate a place to live and be able to get our move made so expeditiously.

We moved into our new home on a Saturday. Our first night there we had a disaster. The lawn had been neglected by the previous owners and so we set the water on the lawn in the back yard. Sunday morning Steve got up and turned the water off before leaving for Priesthood meeting. Not realizing he had turned it off, I went out and turned it on, thinking I was turning it off. About an hour later I went down the stairs to the basement to find something and discovered that we had about two feet of water in the entire basement. All of our books and other stuff which we hadn't unpacked yet were in boxes on the basement floor and were ruined. When Steve got home, I showed him the basement and we began bailing water. It took us most of that Sunday to finally get the water gone and order restored, although we never fully recovered from the loss of books and photos.

Steve began work the next morning at the egg farm in Hagerman. We soon settled in and became acquainted with the good people of the area and those in our ward. Steve was called to work with the priests in the ward and

then served as a counselor in the stake Young Men's organization to Grant Starley. I taught the Laurels in the MIA program.

We loved having our own home and having a large yard in which the kids could play. We bought a swing set, a few items of furniture, and a white Chevy station wagon that was a joy to take trips in.

Stephen and David were about 13 months old when we moved to Buhl and they were such a handful. They were classic examples of the cliché, "Can't live with him, and can't live without him". They had a natural affinity for each other but as toddlers they were always fighting. Most days I felt like a referee, trying to keep them from killing each other!

It was during this time that the war in Vietnam was being waged and sometimes after an especially difficult day with the twins I would say to myself, "I would trade places with any soldier on the battlefield. Nothing could be worse than the time I've had today!"



The weather in Buhl was much milder than what we were accustomed to. Buhl was a part of the Magic Valley area which included Twin Falls, Filer, and Hagerman. The winters were short and spring came early, usually by the first of March so that the fields were worked much earlier than in Southeast Idaho where we had grown up. Many of our neighbors in Buhl grew pear, apricot, and peach trees and had grape vineyards along with prolific gardens.

Soon after our arrival in Buhl I was visiting with my mother about what a change it was to live in this little farm community after spending that last six years in Provo associating with so many gifted professors and professional people. I commented to her that many of the residents of Buhl seemed like "country bumpkins" and I wondered if we would be happy living there. Her response to my comments proved prophetic.

"The people in Buhl may not be as educated as your Provo friends, but they have their own charm. Enjoy their association and learn all you can from them. Some of my favorite people are "country bumpkins!"

She was right. By the time we left Buhl we had met many wonderful and talented people and our departure from the community a year and one half later was difficult because of the many friendships we had made.

Rebecca (Becky) was born while we lived in Buhl. As usual, my pregnancy was difficult with the months of morning sickness and four



other small children to care for. The twins, Steve and David, were nearly two when she was born but were still a terrific handful and there were days when I thought I wasn't going to make it. I knew that these years were important ones as far as teaching obedience but sometimes I

was so worn out that I didn't feel like I had the energy to referee one more fight between them. My parents, whom I constantly consulted via the telephone, reassured me that nothing was more important than teaching obedience and so I tried to put that project at the top of my priority list despite the many other demands on my time and energies.

Becky was born on April 18th 1972 at about four in the afternoon in the Magic Valley Hospital in Twin Falls. Mother arrived the day before the doctor was to induce labor and stayed on to help me cope with the demands of our young family. Becky had a beautiful little face framed with dark hair. She weighed about 7½ pounds. Soon after her birth, Dr. Anderson had some concerns regarding her nose; it was so small that he wasn't sure the passages were large enough for her to breathe through. They advised us to leave her in the hospital until a specialist could examine her. It was a strange feeling to go home from the hospital without a baby in my arms.

Having five children under the age of five was quite an ordeal for the first few weeks and I appreciated Mother's help. She was like an angel of mercy during my recovery. She always knew just what to do and was

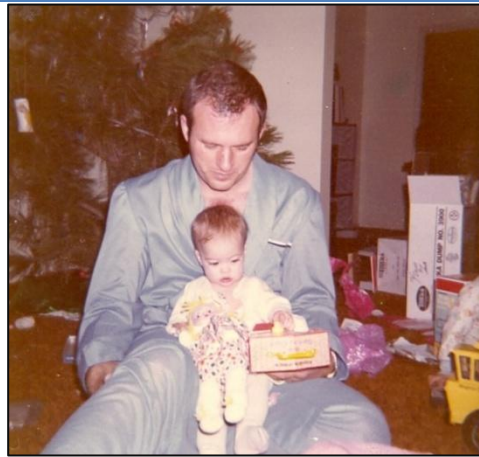


able to bring calm amid the stormy time of transition and adjustment to the new baby.

[May, 1972: Mom's journal] *I must write and express the happiness I feel today! These last few weeks have been filled with the joy that comes when a new baby enters the family. Her name is Rebecca and she is a real angel. She was born April 18th in the Twin Falls hospital. She has quite a head of hair and the most beautiful little face. Everyone loves her although the twins have times of mixed emotions about her.*

We've been married six years now and it's hard to believe that five spirits have been entrusted to our care. Each so distinctive in personality. Stephani is anxious for kindergarden. She writes, spells, draws on everything. Sometimes I'll miss her for a while and upon searching for her I'll find her in a corner busy drawing me another Mother's Day picture. Shauntel is such a beautiful child. She is at a delightful age. Since she and Rebecca are both dark, it has given them a special relationship. The twins, almost two, give me both agony and ecstasy. Our life hasn't been the same since they arrived. Supper time is a messy, noisy, sometimes funny ordeal. Spilled kool-aid, wadded up bread, and tamale pie in their hair is the regular thing. They seem to gain momentum as the day progresses and by nightfall, we all fall, grateful that we are one day closer to their mission calls.

Yesterday David came wandering in, half crying and



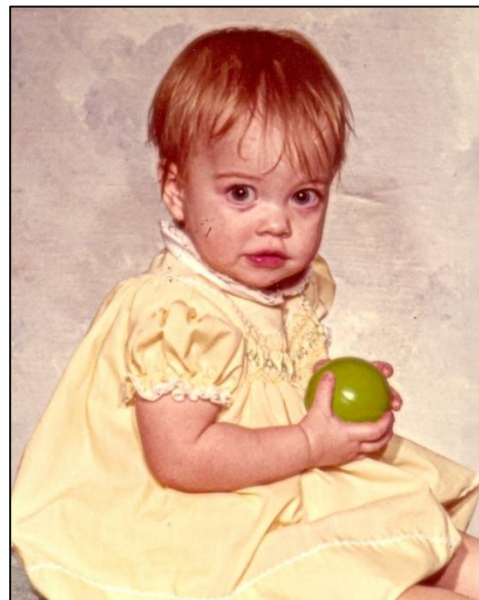
half whining. All at once I spotted an ant on his arm. I ran over to him and found them crawling all over him. He had been playing in an ant hill. I lost no time in stripping him! Thank goodness he had the sense to come in."

Our life in Buhl wasn't without its challenges in Steve's work as well. He was responsible

for the marketing and distribution of eggs to grocery stores throughout the Magic Valley. He had several trucks that were used for hauling the eggs and was responsible also for the hiring of qualified drivers. On one occasion one of the trucks was involved in an accident and tipped over on the interstate to Boise. The whole trailer full of eggs was strewn on the highway and Steve had to facilitate the clean-up and salvage of anything that wasn't ruined in the accident.

Soon after this incident, a more serious accident occurred. One of his drivers fell asleep at the wheel and ran into a semi-trailer full of grain that was stopped on the shoulder of the road. The cab of the egg truck folded, killing the driver instantly. His young daughter, who was sleeping on the seat beside him, received only minor injuries. Steve received word of the accident by phone at 2 a.m. from the highway patrol. Steve had to notify the young widow and work out the details. It was a sobering and difficult time for an inexperienced young manager.

One of the highlights of our time in the Magic Valley was the opportunity Steve had to be a counselor in the stake



Young Men's organization. The president was Grant Starley and he and Steve became fast friends. One of their major projects during this time was the installation of large outdoor lights on the new stake center ball fields.

A general manager for the Idaho Power Company, Hal Walker, was a member of the stake and he utilized his expertise and influence to assist with this very ambitious undertaking. Steve and Hal became close friends and after we had been in Buhl about a year Hal came to Steve with an offer of employment with Idaho Power. It was so "out of the blue" that I think we didn't really even consider it. We thought that our future was bright with Olsen Egg Farms and that Steve would climb the career ladder there. Little did we realize that we would look back on that offer and regret our quick refusal.

While living in Buhl I began having a toothache and so I asked one of the ward members to refer me to a good dentist. She gave me the name of one and I promptly called to see if I could get in for an appointment. The receptionist said that it would be several days before she could work me in and since I was in a lot of pain, she suggested that I try to get into someone else. I noticed a Dr. McClusky in the yellow pages of the phone book and called for an appointment and was able to get one immediately.

Dr. McClusky's office was in an old building with poor lighting and high ceilings and looked like it hadn't been updated for many years. The dentist called me in and I sat in the chair while he examined my teeth. I couldn't help but notice that he didn't have an assistant and that the tray that held the tools was filthy as was the whole



instrument area. I had never seen anything like it and it made me pretty uneasy. I mentioned that I was having problems with a tooth on my right side and he poked around for a few minutes, muttering things like, "Oh, this one will need to come out," and "this whole side needs to be replaced".

When he finished the exam he told me that he would need to extract several of my molars and other teeth and put in some false

teeth and bridges. I was totally alarmed at this news and even more alarmed when he began getting me ready for the extractions right then and there! Normally I am a pretty mellow person and I'm not one to be too contentious but there was something about the whole situation that didn't seem right and I removed the napkin that was around my neck, got out of the chair, and told him that I thought I needed a second opinion. I got out of there as quickly as my legs would carry me!

Since my tooth was still aching I went to the other dentist's office that I had been referred to and pleaded my case in person. The receptionist listened with interest as I told her about my experience with Dr. McClusky. Then she laughed and said that I was smart to not let him start pulling my teeth. She told me that he was famous for fitting everyone he could with false teeth and that he had a drinking problem that definitely affected his good judgment at times. When the dentist took me in and examined my mouth, to my surprise he said that I didn't have any cavities and that I probably needed to check with a physician and see if I had a sinus problem. On his recommendation I did that and sure enough, I was having sinus problems which were easily fixed with antibiotics.

What a close call! And to think that I could have been fitted for false teeth and had that to deal with for the rest of my life! I'm so grateful that I had the sense and courage to get out of the chair and out of there as quickly as possible.

After being in Buhl for a year and a half Steve was promoted to be the plant manager in Draper, Utah. Although it was difficult to leave our many friends in Buhl, we were excited for the new opportunities that awaited us. We were able to quickly sell our home and made enough of a profit that we were able to buy another one in Sandy, Utah, not far from Steve's work. The home was in the final stages of completion and so we stayed with my sister, Kathy, and her husband, Dick, for two weeks in November and moved in on December 1st, 1972.

A TRANSFER TO SANDY, UTAH (December 1972)

The area where our home was located was in a new subdivision and many of the families were young married couples like we were. The ward was friendly and we immediately felt at home and accepted. I was called to be the Young Women's president soon after we arrived. The previous presidency had struggled and so the bishop, Eugene Tenney, wanted some major changes in the way the program was run. When he called me to the position he requested that I retain all the class advisors and that was what I did.

I took the decision regarding my counselors to the Lord and did some fasting before



coming up with names. One of the women I selected was young and when I turned the names in to Bishop Tenney I expressed concern regarding her inexperience. He gave me the following advice: "Age has little to do with a person's ability to assume responsibility. The main thing that age and experience gives us is an ability to cope with tragedy and disappointment."

For the few months that I served I really enjoyed it and my choice of counselors proved to be a good one. I did struggle with the women who were retained from the previous board. Finally I told Bishop Tenney that if he wanted a good program, it had to begin in the young women's classes and as long as the teacher's were weak, the program couldn't be strong. He agreed and we made the necessary changes.

The ward had a long tradition of taking a summer trip to recreation areas in southern Utah and as the time approached for that, I felt that even though I was the president, leaving my five small children for several days was not feasible. Several individuals in the ward offered to care for them but "farming them out" would have involved so much that I knew it wasn't the right

thing to do. Although I did all I could to help organize the event, others in the organization with less demands at home handled the outing. It was the right choice for me at the time and I felt confident that the Lord understood that my first priority was with my little ones.





I'll never forget the morning of February 16th. I was taking care of something in the back bedrooms and I heard the front door open and close. I couldn't figure out who had come into the house. As I walked out of the bedroom, Steve met me in the hall with the news that he had been fired! When I asked him what had happened he said that when he got to work Gil had called him into his office and said, "I no longer have confidence in your accomplishing here what I expected of you. I feel that you would be better off with a fresh start with someone else."

At the time I pleaded with Steve to go back and try to talk things out with Gil, but he said that it wouldn't do any good. What I didn't know until later was that earlier in the month Gil had taken him to task for several things that he felt Steve had mishandled. In Steve's day-timer he wrote the comment, "Session last week was not easy—extremely shattering". Also the day-timer included the information that Olsen Farms was facing a law suit over "price fixing" and that it wasn't clear what this would mean for Steve and his career.

Although Steve had not shared this information with me, it was obvious from his notes that he

had been really devastated by this evaluation and uncertain if he could make the needed changes. Soon thereafter he contacted an old MBA friend and asked about possible employment. Whether Gil found out about this inquiry and it upset him or he just felt like Steve wasn't working out, we will never know. Suffice it to say that this event threw our life into a real tailspin.

We both were bewildered at the situation that we were now facing. Having so recently graduated from college and purchased a new home, we were living on an extremely tight budget. Steve's severance pay amounted to two week's vacation pay.

News of our misfortune quickly reached the ward members and within a few days Bishop Tenney arrived on our doorstep with a box of canned chicken and offers of help. We felt that we hadn't exhausted our resources yet but appreciated his sensitivity to our situation. Other members gave offers of temporary employment until full-time work could be found.

Excerpts from an encouraging letter from Barbara brought us comfort during this difficult time: *"I'm sure this has been one of the most traumatic experiences of your life but remember how a ball bounces—if you put the right kind of*



force behind it, it goes down and then rises to a greater height than when it started. So gather all your forces and go—man! Go with enthusiasm and confidence that you have something of great worth to offer and somewhere someone is going to be lucky enough to be the recipient of your ability to perform. Don't let your desperation for a job show through...You have the brains and the ability and personality and appearance to do a great job and I know you can do it. You have our prayers and faith behind you all the way!"

Each morning Steve would get dressed up and go to the employment agency, check the want ads for jobs, and phone anyone he knew that might be able to give him a lead. Although he had a good education, many of the interviews were for positions several months in the future and would have required relocating. We knew that financially we couldn't wait several months and as the days passed, our anxiety grew. It was truly one of the most trying times in our marriage and a frightening development unlike anything we had ever experienced. It was very humbling to realize that we had gone from being self-



sufficient to "needy" overnight.

It is always interesting to evaluate an experience with "hind-sight". Looking back at this situation we should have picked up on some clues that Gil wasn't happy with Steve's performance. When we were first transferred to Buhl, we hunted for housing but there was just nothing available in the way of apartments. We were fresh out of college and in those days in order to purchase a house, a person had to pay a certain % in cash for the down payment before a sale could be made. We did not have the funds to do this so the president of Olsen Farms loaned us \$4,000 to enable us to get into a home. This loan was unsecured although that didn't make any difference to us since we had every intention of repaying it, secured or not.

Just a few weeks prior to our move from Buhl, Gil mentioned the loan and said that his boss wanted payment in full on the note. We had been faithful in making payments since getting the loan so this seemed a little strange to us at

the time but we went ahead and got the money together to pay it off. After Steve got fired he began to think that Gil knew when he transferred him that they were going to



terminate his employment or else why would he be so concerned that he get the repayment for the loan?

Also, Steve had once mentioned to the secretary at the Hagerman plant that he felt like if he ever wanted to change jobs that the Salt Lake Valley sure had a lot of opportunities for someone with his credentials. Later he wondered if she had shared with Gil these comments and Gil thought that by transferring us to the Draper plant that we would be in a better situation to find other employment should Olsen's Eggs chose to let him go. Of course, all of this was just conjecture on our part and could never be confirmed, so we just had to move ahead and work with the hand we were dealt, however misused we felt.

One of Steve's school friends heard of our predicament and phoned to tell us that the General Sunday School Board was looking for an assistant secretary. Steve interviewed and was offered the position. Although it was for less pay than his previous job, we knew that it would be a unique opportunity to work with some wonderful men.

We turned to the Lord and prayed that we would know if this opportunity was the right one for us. We spent many hours discussing the pros and cons of the job and finally, though reason and circumstances said, "Yes", the Spirit whispered, "No", and we turned down the offer. It may be of interest to note that the General Sunday



School Presidency that Steve interviewed with included Russell M. Nelson and Joseph B. Wirthlin.

Steve's friend was disappointed that we chose not to go to work for the Church but a few months later called to tell us that our decision was inspired. During that few months the General Sunday School organization underwent some major restructuring and the job Steve interviewed for was eliminated.

Not too many days later an architect from a firm in Provo called and offered Steve a job as business manager. He accepted and we felt overjoyed to once again be employed. He had been unemployed for exactly a month when he started working for Lee Knell's firm.

Now we were faced with a host of new decisions

including whether to sell our home and move to Provo or to have Steve commute to work. Foremost in our deliberations was the fact that we were so strapped financially that we couldn't make any missteps. We made it a matter of prayer and decided to seek the counsel of Bishop Tenney.

When we met with him, he jokingly told us that we shouldn't





move; that we needed to stay right where we were and to continue to give service in the ward. (I was the Young Woman's president and Steve was called as second counselor in the bishopric to Herb Williams just a few weeks later when Bishop Tenney was released). After more discussion he told us that he truly did feel that we should just stay put for a while longer, and that the Lord would help us to know what we should do. We accepted his counsel and took our home off the market.

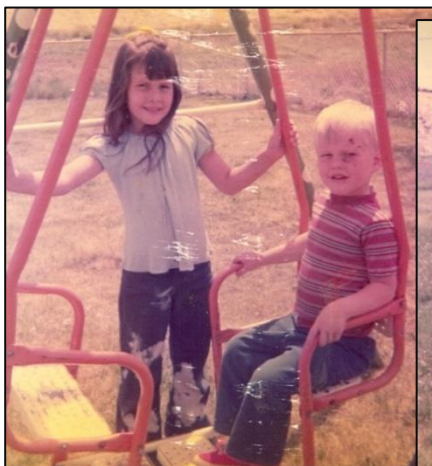
Several weeks later Allan called and asked Steve if he would consider returning to the farm to be his farm manager. He explained that with him (Allan) serving as stake president and in the state legislature, that the farm was an orphan. He needed help and wondered if Steve was

interested. It had never occurred to us that we might one day return to make our livelihood in farming.

After praying about Allan's offer, we decided to decline. But, rather than tell him over the phone, we decided to make a visit and talk it through with him. When Steve called to ask if we could come for the weekend, Allan said that Barbara was having the kitchen remodeled and doing dishes in the bathtub and that it would be difficult for her to entertain house guests under those conditions. We agreed to come at a later date.

One morning a few days later, Steve said to me, "I think we've made a mistake. This morning as I arose, it was as if a voice said to me, 'Steve, go back to the farm.' I think we need to reconsider Dad's offer." And so we did. Two months later we left our new home, many dear friends, and headed for Idaho.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention our great love and appreciation for Gene and Norda Tenney who were a constant source of support and encouragement during those last tumultuous months in Sandy. Bishop Tenney was our bishop as well as our stake president, called to that position just a few months before we moved. For several years following our move they continued to keep in touch and eventually President Tenney was called as the Patriarch in



that stake.

RETURNING TO THE FARM (July '73)

It was in July of 1973 that we returned to the farm. We rented a large home in Taber (originally built by Leigh Bair) which was about 15 miles west of Blackfoot. Our nearest neighbor was about a half mile down the road so it was quite an adjustment for all of us after living for so many years in more populated areas.

Barbara and Karen had cleaned and prepared the house for our arrival so we were able to move right in. We so appreciated their sensitivity to our needs. Although our home in Sandy was not yet sold, just a few days later a young couple bought it and we were able to walk away with enough money to have a down payment on another home when we were ready to build.

Adjusting to living on a farm 15 miles from the nearest town or church was not an easy thing. Steve worked from sun up to sun down most days and our schedule was turned upside down. The children had been accustomed to having lots of neighborhood children to play with. Now they were alone, except for having each other. It took a while for them to realize that they could make their own fun.

It took me a while to see the beauty of the desert. Even though we had spent two



summers farming for Allan earlier in our marriage, I thought at that time that it was only a temporary job and so I didn't feel the need that I now felt to "connect" with my surroundings. I missed the beautiful mountains that had been a part of our lives both in Provo and Sandy.

One day I was taking out the garbage and a hawk flew

overhead. I looked up and for the first time I saw the broad expanse of beautiful blue sky. There was nothing to obscure the view. I soon discovered that the evening sun in the west was



another magnificent sight as it dropped from view. I learned to anticipate the cool evenings after the warm summer day and to delight in the sounds of the rain birds, ticking away as they watered the lush fields of grain and potatoes. I also began to appreciate the quiet of country living as opposed to the noisy hubbub of the city. Before long we had settled in and began to

feel like we fit. We began to call ourselves with pride, "desert rats".

The fall that we moved to the farm Stephani started into first grade at Moreland Elementary.

I had assumed that Shauntel would be able to attend kindergarten but soon was informed that the kindergarten then offered at Moreland was on a first come, first served basis and because we were new to the area, Shauntel wasn't signed up for it. Of course, she was disappointed. But, as the year progressed, she taught herself her numbers and



was even a good reader by the time she entered first grade the following year. She was just so smart that missing that year of school never even fazed her!

1973-75

It was during our time in the Tabor house that we first began working with the Mexicans who provided much of the labor on our farm as pipe movers. These men would come across the border from Mexico, usually illegally, and find work in farm communities. Allan had always hired Mexicans and he had even learned enough Spanish that he was very effective in communicating with them. He had two families, who arrived in early spring and stayed until the harvest was over in October and then returned to Texas where they had permanent residences.

His primary hired man for many years was Ignacio Guerra. He and his wife, Amelia, lived in a trailer on Allan's farm. They had three children and when we moved to our new home on Allan's farm we developed a warm friendship with them. We often visited them, shared goodies and garden produce, and they in turn always remembered us at Christmas with a wonderful plate of homemade tamales!

Those Mexicans who came into the United States illegally were called "wetbacks" because many of them would swim the Rio Grande to get into the U.S. without detection. While we still lived in Tabor we became acquainted with two such young



men, Saul and Loreano. They worked moving pipe for us on the farm and lived in one of the railroad boxcars that long ago had been fixed up for transient laborers.

Not long after their arrival, by "hook or by crook", they acquired an old car and began using it in their spare time. It was common for the Mexicans who had never had the opportunity to own or drive a car in Mexico to purchase one in the U.S. and teach themselves to drive. As you can imagine, this had its problems,

including the lack of insurance and proper licensing. They knew that if a policeman stopped them for any reason and discovered that they weren't licensed or carrying a green card (work visa), they would be deported.

One night, quite late, we heard our dog barking and knew that something was going on outside. In a few moments, a knock came at the door and we opened it to find Saul and Loreano, both badly shaken and distraught. They had been on their way home to the farm and had been driving too fast on the narrow Tabor road and had gone off the side and

rolled their car several times. Somehow they had survived and crawled out once it came to rest. They didn't wait around for someone to stop and give assistance. They both started running, despite their injuries, and didn't stop until they arrived at our doorstep, exhausted and bleeding.

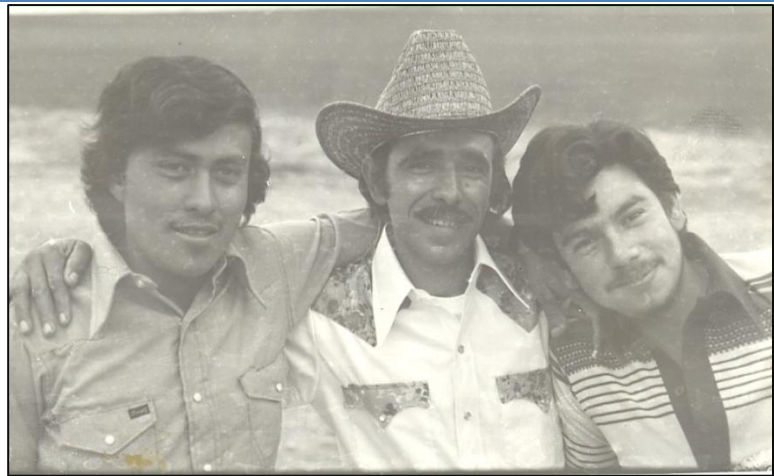
We took them in, doctored their injuries, and listened as they explained what had happened. The car was no great loss since it had only cost them a couple hundred dollars, but their biggest fear was that they would be deported and have to go through the process of reentering the United States, which was both costly and dangerous. After patching them up, we drove them home. That experience was the beginning of a strong friendship that continued as the summer passed.

We decided to present them with a Book of Mormon and they agreed to read it. We checked with the Idaho Boise Mission president and he informed us that the Church had a policy of refusing baptism to anyone who was in the country illegally. But, although we couldn't invite the missionaries to teach them, we did the best we could and soon we took them with us to Sunday School. A Spanish Sunday school class was held to teach them the gospel.



Saul was especially receptive and one Sunday as the class was finishing, he made the comment, "At home in Mexico my mother lives in a cellar. She is nearly blind and lives in partial darkness. When I return to Mexico I will share with her what I have learned about the gospel and for her, a new light will shine." It was a sweet experience to introduce him to gospel truths and see the way his life was changing because of it.

Not long after moving into the ward Steve was called to be the priest quorum advisor. He had a natural rapport with the young men and enjoyed the associations with



them. It might be of interest to mention some of the young men he worked with: Verlin and Steven Love, Lloyd Porritt, Steve, Mark and Matt Bair, Kent Havens, Jerry and Larry Bingham, and

Mark and Lee Griffiths. Some of these young men became frequent visitors to our home especially when I helped with some of their weekday quorum activities.

One night we had a special manners dinner at our home. I had really gone to a lot of work to make it nice for them despite the fact that I was struggling with morning sickness and

feeling rather punk. As usual, following the activity, the boys were teasing me as they helped me clean up. Just as the last of them was leaving someone called for me to come outside. I was





surprised to see that some of these priests had toilet papered our front yard, cars, and bushes. I could hear

them laughing and running down the road toward Richard Bairs' house and I yelled after them, "Is that any way to thank a sick pregnant woman?"

Later when Steve went outside to clean up the toilet paper, we discovered that the boys had returned and completely cleaned it up! I guess they felt guilty about it. They were such a great group of boys and turned into fine missionaries and men as the years passed.

It was during this time that I was called to work in the Primary. Although many newly married women spend their early years in this organization, because of our many years at BYU my callings had been mostly in the Relief Society. I was happy for this new assignment and looked forward to the opportunity since I now had several children of my own who were old enough to attend Primary.

My assignment was to teach the nine-year-old boy's class. There were seven or eight boys in that age group and they were a very active bunch. It was a rude awakening after working with women for so long to adjust to handling this rambunctious group of boys. I

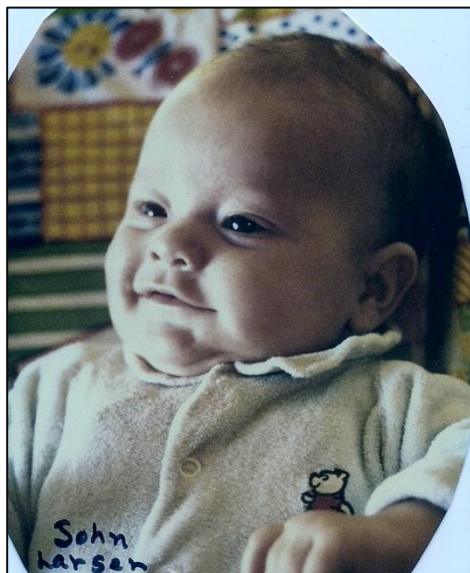
could see that I needed to be as much an entertainer and disciplinarian as a teacher.

The first time I taught the class the boys were here, there, and everywhere; opening windows, leaning back on their chairs, and punching and poking each other for the entire class time. As the bell rang for dismissal, I gave a sigh of relief and instructed them to line up at the door so our exit could be orderly.

As the boys jostled for position, the first boy in the line was bumped and his gum went flying out of his mouth and onto the floor. Each boy, in turn, as he exited the room, stomped on the gum, until the entire group was gone and only the gum's owner was left. He looked forlornly at the now leveled and dirty piece of gum. Then, without ceremony, he scraped the gum off the floor, popped it into his mouth, and went happily on his way! I knew then that this new church job was going to be unlike any I had ever had!

I can't remember how long I served in that calling but it wasn't long. I was called to serve as the inservice leader on the stake Primary board and that brought me a welcome reprieve!

Another baby was on the way, due to arrive in August. My days were hectic trying to care for five young children. The first few months of



pregnancy were always the hardest for me. Morning sickness seemed my lot with each pregnancy although at three months the symptoms usually subsided and for the balance of the pregnancy, I enjoyed good health.

I had a friend who during this pregnancy was quite critical of my choice to have another baby. She felt that having so many young children was



unwise
and that
they

were certain to be neglected. I wrestled with her comments and during the ensuing months I felt that I had a strong confirmation by the Spirit that my course of action was pleasing to the Lord and that there was nothing more precious than these children who were coming into our home.

On August 29, 1974 John Berkeley was born, weighing in at nine and one half pounds! He was a joy from the start, having a sweet and patient temperament. I called him my Primary baby for just a few days before his birth President Marvin Wray called me to be the new stake Primary president. I was totally overwhelmed by the calling! How could I possibly fulfill the requirements of my calling with all of the demands at home? I wanted to refuse but accepted and went to the Lord, asking for inspiration in selecting my counselors.

After fasting and praying, I selected Judy Elison and Kathryn Katseanes. Judy had been a counselor to my predecessor, Winona Thompson, but Kathryn was a relative stranger to me. I had become aware of her during a choir festival practice and

felt an immediate bond with her. They both accepted and we became a presidency. A few days later John was born and our first presidency meeting was held soon after I arrived home from the hospital.

Although the task before me seemed enormous, day by day, assisted by two capable counselors and the powers of heaven, we began to organize the stake board. The next year was full of sweet times as well as difficult ones. But, as we visited the wards for conferences, held leadership meetings, and instructed the ward leaders, we felt the sustaining influence of the Lord.

It was during this time that we made plans to build a home on Allan's farm. He deeded us an acre of land adjoining his farming operation and



we contracted with Dale Christensen of Firth to build it. In August of '75 we moved into our new home. Two of our closest neighbors were the Richard and Annette Bair family and the Don and Ida Bingham family. The Bingham's lived right through the field from us and although most of their children were teen-agers at the time we moved into the ward, their youngest son, Ted, was only a couple of years older than Stephani and he was a favorite of the kids.

On April 18, 1975 my brother, Charles was married to Brenda Zirker in the Salt Lake Temple and on June 27th of that same year my sister, Deniece, was married to Don Wesley Cheney in the Salt Lake Temple, also. It must have been a year for weddings because Steve's brother, Mark, married Rita Kay Platzek in the Los Angeles Temple on July 11th.

The following letter was received from **Ida Bingham**: *"Dear Susan and Stephen, Just a note to tell you what happened in our home evening tonight. The subject was "Happiness." How we can give it to others and others who have given it to us. When asked about the others, all the kids voices rang out, "The Larsens, the night we were invited over there for supper." I thought you should know that. Don and I really appreciated your taking time out to make their day as we could tell by our telephone calls that they were getting homesick. We sure want to thank you. I fell in love with your little family the first*

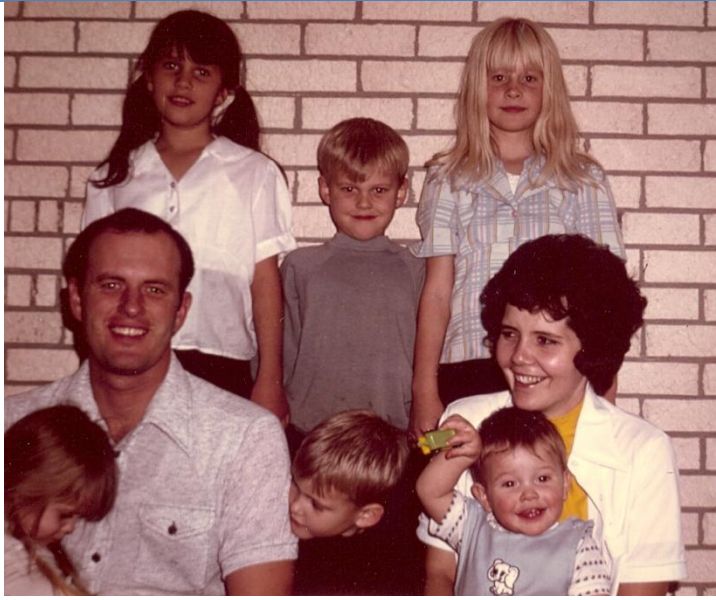
time I laid eyes on them. You can be so proud of them. I hope you'll let me tend them when you and Stephen want to do some Christmas shopping."

As a stake Primary board we attended June conference together. In those days the Church held June conference and all the auxiliaries attended special sessions to learn their duties and receive inspiration. Several of us were seated in the balcony of the tabernacle during an afternoon session. All at once, my counselor, Judy Elison, got up and exited hurriedly. The rest of us didn't know what was going on and I followed her out, thinking that maybe she was ill. She was very distraught and felt that something was wrong at home. She found a telephone (this was in the days before cellular phones) and quickly called her family. They reassured her that all was well. She was very puzzled at this since the impression she had was of danger or trouble. She returned to the conference session and tried to put the impression aside.

Following our move to our new home my



responsibilities in the stake Primary continued to tax me. Then a series of events combined to bring about my release. My counselor, Judy Elison, was involved in a very serious car accident. She broke her neck, but fortunately she did not sever her spinal column and suffer



paralysis. For months following the accident, Judy was hospitalized and in traction and then after that she returned home but was unable to do much. She said the doctor's instructions were, "You may pluck your eyebrows! Nothing more!" She was the mother of seven children and was pregnant with the eighth when the accident occurred. We were all so grateful that a few months later she safely delivered her baby without complications of any kind. Later she told me that she felt that her impressions at June conference had been in regards to the upcoming accident.

While she was in the hospital in traction, I tried to keep touch with her and her family's needs. She had two very capable daughters and five other younger children, but I knew that surely there were things that they needed help with. When the time came for canning, I asked Judy if I could help. Her response was, "Everyone has been so good to help us. But, if the sisters lift the entire burden from my family, they will not have the opportunity to learn from this experience all the important things that they need to know. They need to work together and find solutions to these challenges that we are facing." I realized that she was right and that each of us needs to

take this approach when our families are faced with trials.

She taught me another lesson after she came home from her extended hospital stay. She told me that during her first few days home there was a profound spirit of gratitude and reverence among the

family for her life, her safety, and the privilege of having her near. As she described this to me I realized that true reverence is founded in gratitude and that this pertains to all situations. When we feel overflowing gratitude, we are filled with awe and reverence.

Needless to say, as the events surrounding Judy's accident unfolded, I recognized that I would need to call a new counselor to replace her. I began that process with President Wray's blessing. I made a list of possible candidates and fasted and prayed for inspiration, but to no avail. It was frustrating. I had always felt like I received





Steve selected as counselors Gary Love and Darlo Bingham with Dale Bergivan, Boyd Christensen, and Boyd Benson as clerks and Richard Oram as executive secretary.

answers to my prayers, but I had not had any clear impressions and decided to counsel with President Wray regarding it.

A few days later Steve received an invitation for us to meet with the stake president, who at the time was his father, Allan. At that interview, Steve was called to be the new bishop of the Moreland Second Ward. **[January 17, 1978: Dad's journal]** *Ever since I was ordained Bishop of the Moreland Second Ward nearly 2 ½ years ago I intended to write of my feelings and experiences. I have always felt that I would be a useful tool in the Lord's hands especially because of the thrust of my patriarchal blessing. It was still a tremendous surprise to be called in by President Larsen (my dad) and interviewed for worthiness and then informed that the Lord wanted me to be a bishop. Susan said of her interview that it was so thorough that she wondered if she was going to be called to be president of the Church!*

President Larsen said that the day they were discussing in stake presidency meeting who should be bishop that he came into sacrament meeting and all three individuals who were under consideration spoke on the program and he knew that the Lord wanted me. What a humbling, challenging call from the Lord!

Later Craig Barton served as a counselor. Steve was ordained and set apart as bishop by his father on September 14th, 1975. He served from September of '75-July of '81.

His line of authority for his ordination as a Bishop as well as his ordination as an Elder (February 24, 1963) was as follows: Allan Franklin Larsen; Joseph F. Merrill; Heber J. Grant; George Q. Cannon; Brigham Young; Joseph Smith; Peter, James and John; The Lord Jesus Christ.

As a result of Steve's calling, I was released from the stake Primary. I then understood why my prayers for guidance in the selection of a new counselor had gone unanswered. With my release, my life became more manageable. I was called to teach the Spiritual Living lesson in Relief Society once a month. I was delighted to have a smaller responsibility and focus my efforts on my growing family.

The following was included in a Moreland Second Ward history and chronicles a few of Steve's experiences during his time as Bishop: *"As one can imagine, those were busy times, full of wonderful, yet stressful experiences. Fortunately Steve worked with a wonderful group of dedicated members who had strong testimonies of the gospel and who magnified their callings in*



every respect. Especially dear to him were the two Relief Society presidents who served when he was bishop: Lois Olsen and Janiece Bair.

Perhaps his most treasured memories revolve around the many young women and men whom he worked with during his six years as bishop. Over the years he regularly attended Girls' Camp, took bike hikes through Yellowstone Park with the older Young Men groups, went on horse-packing trips, enjoyed motorcycle and snowmobile super activities, attended scout camp with the deacons, and shared many a testimony meeting around a camp fire, relishing the growth that he saw in the youth as the years passed. His Tuesday night ritual was to leave our home in our 12 passenger Beauville van and pick up youth coming and going from Mutual, visiting and building bonds as he went!

It might be of interest to mention some of the many youth with whom he worked: Lloyd Porrit; Verlan, Steven, and Sheila Love; Steven, Mark

and Lori Bair; Gary, Christi, Mark, Lee and Laura Griffiths; Cindy and Matt Bair; Larry, Idona, Jerry, and Ted Bingham; Lane and Stephani Dalley; Jerry Gregersen; Betty, Peter, Carol and Kent Christiansen; Carma Jean, Arlene and Roger Christiansen; Conrad and Cheryl Belnap; Karen and Rick Larsen; Brent, Brian, Bret, Candice and Bryce Harper; Rodney and Kathleen Lake; Sonja Heady; Carla and Kara Hedin; Jalene, Roxey, Janice, and Allen Hunsake;, Annis Christensen; Dirk and Candice Gamble; Cindy Rainsdon; Bret and Diane Perschon; Diane and Susan Benson; Kevin, Robin, and Sherry Young; Anita Hale; Carla, David, and Jeff Vail; and David and Mandy Smith.

One memorable experience involved a service project by the priesthood quorums to construct seating at the five stake girls' camp, Pasa la Coma. Men cut down the trees, trimmed the logs of branches and Wynn Havens, who had a team of large work horses, snaked the logs out of the woods, dragging them to the site for the project while others secured them in place. The seating was used for over 20 years before it had to be replaced....

Perhaps one of his most difficult experiences was making a visit to Rulon Parks upon learning that his son, Dean, had been killed in an airplane crash. When Steve arrived to express his condolences to Rulon, he quickly realized that Rulon had not yet been notified and so Steve, as his bishop, had the difficult task of informing him of the accident."

It was a challenge for Steve to always be alert in sacrament meeting. His meetings started early on Sunday



mornings and it wasn't at all unusual for him to spend almost the entire day doing church work. The kids would often comment that "Daddy is resting his eyes or studying his tie" when he would drop off during meeting. One ward member told us that her little boy once said, "Bishop Larsen sure does blink slow!"

In the fall of '75 Steve and David started kindergarten. It was during this time that the Idaho legislature was considering a bill to make kindergarten a part of the public school system. Allan was opposed to kindergarten, feeling like children were better off being at home an additional year with their mother. I remember thinking about how this would impact me if the bill was voted down. I would have Steve and David home for another year! Even though I knew Allan was opposed to kindergarten, I certainly wasn't and was grateful when the majority of the Legislature agreed with me!

Although they only went to school a half day, their time away from home included a long bus ride. Sometimes they would be so worn out that they would fall asleep on the bus and have to be awakened when they arrived at our home.

When they started school I requested that they be put in different classrooms so that they could each have their own friends and experiences, but they were as alike academically and socially as they were physically and always gravitated towards each other.

When the twins started school Stephani and Shauntel were a couple of years ahead of them. As I attended parent/teacher conferences for the girls, the reports were

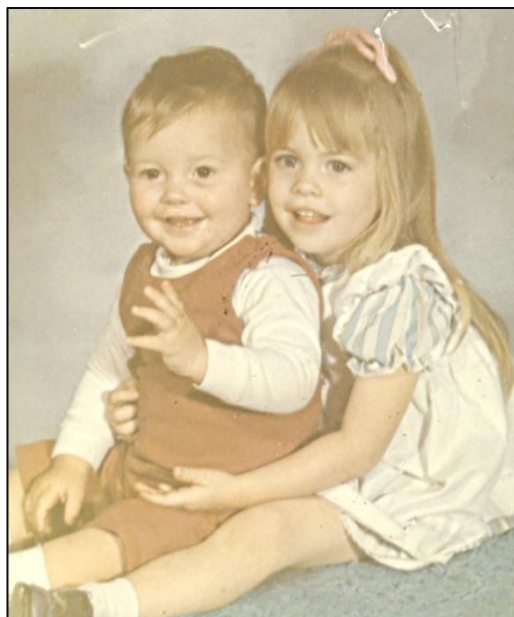


always glowing. I suspected that the teachers probably never said anything critical about their students to the parents. Well, when I went for some of my first parent/teacher conferences for Stephen and David, I found that I had been mistaken. Their teachers were honest and admitted that although the boys were well behaved, they were definitely not at the top of their classes.

Their mediocre performances in school changed dramatically as they got older. By the time they were in fifth and sixth grade they were doing "A" work. I think that maybe in those early years as toddlers they were so busy fighting with each

other that other things didn't factor into their consciousness and it took them a few years once they got into school to start focusing on learning. It's the only explanation I can come up with.

Those years of having four in elementary school and other little ones at home were pretty hectic. One of David's teachers shared an experience with me that





helped me realize that the kids were aware of the load I was carrying and tried to help out in any way they could. The teacher had asked if any of the students' mothers could

help by bringing valentine cookies for the upcoming Valentine's Day party. David's hand shot up and the teacher assumed he was volunteering me for the duty. But David had no such thing in mind. When the teacher called on him he said, "Don't ask my mom. She's way too busy!"

1976

In April of 1976 Wilson Harper approached Steve about running for a position on the school board. The election was to be held in May and as yet no one had filled out a petition to fill the vacant seat. Steve had always been interested in the political process and had a good feel for it by observing his grandfather and father's involvements over the years. Wilson was pretty determined to convince him since he said that the danger in not having a worthy candidate is that a write-in candidate could then easily win the seat, whether he was qualified or not. So, with Steve's approval, Wilson got the petition and needed signatures, and submitted it by the required deadline.

Well, because Steve was the only candidate for our zone, he didn't think that he needed to campaign. Soon the day for the election arrived. Unbeknownst to us (or Wilson) a group of patrons in our zone decided that "one Larsen in politics was enough" and they organized a write-

in campaign for another candidate. The morning after the election, the results were on the front page of the Blackfoot News: "Larsen Loses School Board Bid to Write-In Candidate!" It was a pretty low blow considering that those who spear-headed the campaign were in our own ward. That was hard for both Steve and I and taught us an early lesson that in the political arena, things can be pretty treacherous.

It was about this time that we again became involved with missionary work. One morning we were having breakfast and a knock came at our door. Our visitor was a man who said that he had some Mexicans who were looking for work. He wondered if we needed any help on the farm.

Steve told him that we were looking for some pipe movers. He walked to his pick-up which had a shell on the back and opened it up. Seated there were a group of Latino men. They looked tired and travel-worn. Steve chose two: Manuel Travino and Alias Neri. They had come from Mexico illegally, being transported by the "coyote" for a price.

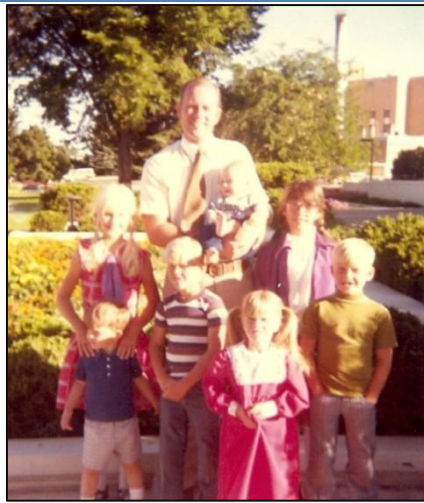
We invited them to join us for breakfast and we became better acquainted. Although our Spanish was limited, we somehow communicated and a sweet friendship began. Steve took them to get settled into the labor house and then to



Blackfoot for groceries. They were hired to move pipe both morning and night and to help with other things as needed. Quite soon after they arrived we gave them a Book of Mormon and invited them to read it.

One of the men, Manuel Trevino, immediately became interested in the Church. Due to a change in mission policy, we were able to have the full-time Spanish missionaries teach him the discussions. After receiving the lessons, Manuel wanted to be baptized. He was the first fruits of our labors that summer of '76 and as a result of his conversion, our ward held a special Spanish investigator class each Sunday. Soon other farmers in the area were bringing their hired help to our ward and before the summer was over, 17 Mexicans were baptized. As a part of this missionary effort, we hosted numerous firesides, parties, dinners and other events to help fellowship them. Many families in the area got involved with us including Stan and Nancy Williams, Ron and Ramona Murdock, Jay and MarJean Callister, and Zane Hansen.

For the next several years our ward spearheaded this missionary effort and these Mexicans became an important part of our ward family. It was a thrill to see them bless and pass the



sacrament. We even had one of our converts who eventually married in the temple and received his patriarchal blessing while living in our area. It would be difficult to chronicle all the experiences we had as we taught and fellowshipped them, but I would like to mention a few.

One of the Mexicans who joined the church was Romulo. He was older than most of the other

workers and was a father figure to a lot of them. Like most, he had never owned a car nor learned

to drive. But, one of the first things he did when he got some money was to buy an old car. He taught himself to drive and enjoyed the freedom it gave him.

One night he failed to stop at a Stop sign and hit a large truck broadside, his car going under the truck and seriously injuring him. He was immediately transported to the hospital

where he received medical help. He knew that sooner or later he would be questioned about his status as an illegal alien and so as soon as he was able, he left the hospital and made his way to our house. When he arrived he was bandaged and his hair was still matted from the blood where he had been stitched up. We took him in and carefully washed and cut his hair and the area around the wound and got him settled down where he could sleep and get the rest





he needed. He fully recovered and was soon able to go back to work.

That fall when the harvest was over, Romulo came to our house one night. He said that he was

leaving for Mexico and that he wanted to give us his car in exchange for all of our kindnesses to him. I was totally surprised at the depth of his appreciation and told him that surely he could sell it and use the money for his family in Mexico. He said that he was scheduled to leave the next day and didn't have the time, so I told him that I would sell the car and mail him the money.

He put his arms around me and gave me a big hug and then was gone. A while later we sold the car to a neighbor and were able to send the money to him. He, like so many we saw baptized, never came back to work in our area. A few found full-time work and eventually brought their families to America and made a new life for themselves, but most we never saw again.



On October 19, 1976 another baby, Michael Andrew, joined our family. He was good-natured and contented except for a little fussy period that he had each evening for a couple of hours. The Lord

must have known that I needed a good baby at that stage of my mothering, so he sent us Mike.

On Sundays our young family would march into the chapel and sit close to the front so that the kids could see and be seen by their bishop father. While Mike was a baby, he would be in his infant seat at the end of the bench and I would be seated in the middle, acting as referee to the others. If Mike started to fuss, we would pull the receiving blanket up over his head and he would settle right down and go back to sleep. That was a huge help since I was busy wrestling two-year-old John and the rest of the bunch.

Early in 1978 Barbara requested that the Larsen siblings each write a monthly family letter and



mail it to her. She copied them off and mailed a packet of these letters to each family each month. Over the years some of these monthly updates were lost but many were saved and are a wonderful record of Dad's thoughts and activities for the years '78-90 when Barbara passed away and the practice

was discontinued. Excerpts from these letters and some I wrote during that time are the nucleus for our family's history of those busy years.

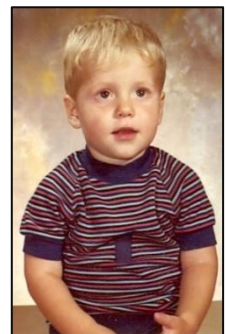
1978

*Steve is serving as bishop of Moreland 2nd Ward

*Steve is V.P. of Irrigation Pumpers Association

*We purchase Leigh Bair's farm of 320 acres and Steve farms a total of 940 acres

*Allan released as stake president/called as Regional Representative



- *Revelation regarding Blacks receiving the priesthood
- *Steve and David are baptized and join Cub Scouts
- *Allan wins Republican Primary election for Governor
- *Paul born on September 19, 1978
- *Allan loses gubernatorial race to John Evans
- *Rick returns from Korea, Pusan Mission



I suggested several times that despite how busy Allan was, the two of them needed a weekly sit-down, talk-it-over session so that the decisions weren't all resting on Steve's shoulders. I think Allan was so involved that he just didn't realize how tough it was on Steve to have the full

responsibility without input from him or to make decisions and then have Allan second-guess him.

In January of '78 an opportunity presented itself for us to buy a farm from Leigh Bair. He was selling 320 acres in the Tabor area. The selling price was \$240,000 for 320 acres including the sprinkler system, cellar and shop. Steve talked to Allan about buying this ground and then farming Allan's place (640) as well as our own 320. We worked out an agreement with Allan for the use of his equipment and Steve began managing both farms.

One of the most challenging things Steve had to deal with as the manager of his Dad's farm was Allan's heavy involvement in other activities. He was serving as president of the Blackfoot West Stake and as Speaker of the House in the Idaho Legislature. He was highly respected and had an unusual ability to bring both parties together for the common good. Steve was proud of Allan's accomplishments and wanted to successfully run the farm so that Allan wouldn't have to worry about it. We knew (because we had heard Allan comment on it) that because Steve had his Masters of Business Administration degree that Allan felt that he could just leave it in his hands, but Steve knew that there was still much that he needed to learn.

One spring Allan and Barbara took an Alaskan Princess Cruise. While they were gone Steve was approached by Lyle Peterson about building a metal potato cellar. Steve knew that on numerous occasions Allan had commented that they sure needed a new spud cellar but nothing had come of it until Lyle approached Steve.

Well, to make the story short, Steve contracted to have a new building put up and Lyle went right to work getting the crew out there and into the job so that when Allan arrived home, the footings and some of the building were under construction. Allan was upset that Steve would move on this decision without his consent but Steve thought he had permission to move ahead. It was a misunderstanding that could have been



avoided and foreshadowed problems ahead.

In April of '78 our stake was divided and Allan was released as stake president. Just prior to that he had received a calling from Ezra Taft Benson to be a Regional Representative. He mentioned that he was on the verge of announcing his bid for Idaho's governor and

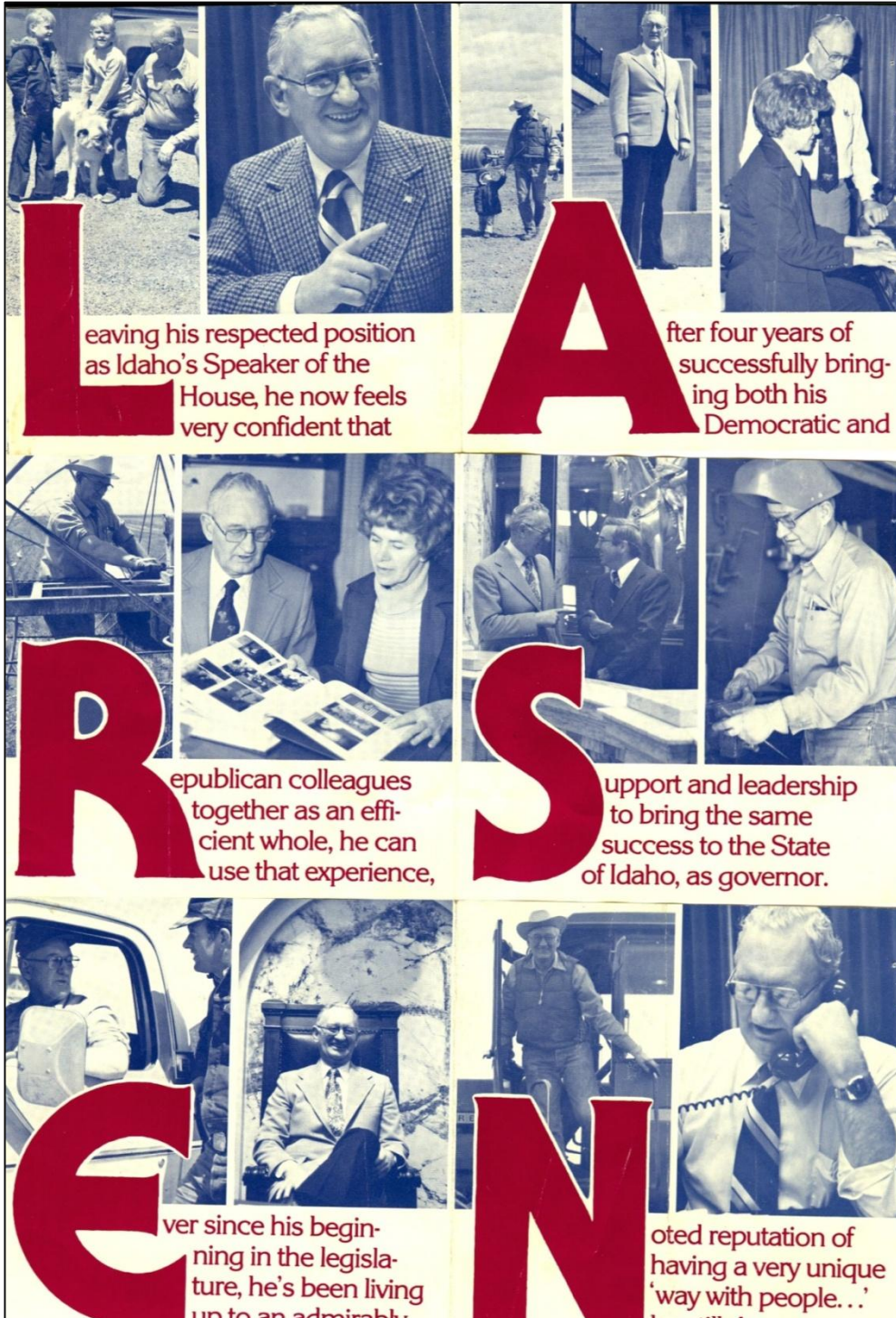
President Benson decided to delay his appointment to Regional Representative until later in July.

It was a busy time for all of us as Allan and Barbara put their efforts into running a state-wide campaign. It was a wonderful surprise when Allan won the Primary election against six other

Republican contenders. The campaigning intensified as November approached and Allan traveled throughout the state campaigning against his Democratic opponent, John Evans.

While Allan campaigned Steve continued to run the farm and get things ready for the upcoming harvest. I was doing my best to be supportive and also anticipating the arrival of our next baby.

As one can imagine, our lives were full and hectic trying to meet the demands of work, Church callings, and our growing family. While I was busy with little ones, Steve was also trying



to get the basement finished off.

[January 27, 1978: Dad's journal] *My primary activity this winter has been finishing off the basement. Work has included perfa-taping, texturing the ceiling, painting, paneling, hanging doors, etc. One of the most frightening challenges has been the prospects of doing the stonework to finish off our fireplace. Yesterday I finally made a beginning. It was difficult and challenging but not impossible. I now have confidence that I can do a respectable job.*

The following journal entry gives insight into Steve's feelings about being bishop: **[Dad]** *It seems like it usually takes Monday to recover from my day of rest. I don't see how Bishop Bingham was able to last ten years as Bishop. There is such a constant emotional and spiritual drain with always being responsible, always building, strengthening, challenging, and so forth. I will admit that everything considered, it is a joy and constant source of satisfaction to see people grow spiritually, to see the ward maintain a position of leader in most areas of the stake comparative report, and to see the gospel touch and transform peoples' lives. So I will not complain but will constantly rejoice in my Lord and the opportunities I have to serve Him.*

In February, an old BYU friend of ours contacted us about doing an article about our family for the BYU Today Magazine. He thought that

it was interesting that after spending six years in college and earning an MBA that Steve was back farming. We agreed to have him come and interview us and later the following article was published, featuring us and our family:

Dirt farmer, Stephen Larsen, MBA: 5:00 a.m.

There are no roosters crowing at the break of dawn on this farm—no squealing pigs to be slopped or cows to be milked. There is no sharp smell of manure in the barnyard, just the rich diesel exhaust from the 135/hp tractor as it wheels in from the fields. And this farmer isn't getting up—he's going to bed.

"I like to bale the hay while the dew is on," says 34-year-old Stephen Larsen, who lives with his wife, Susan, and their seven children on their remote family farm some 20 miles west of Blackfoot, Idaho. "If the hay is dry, it cracks, the leaves fall off, and only the stems are left. So baling is done at night." Unlikely work for an MBA graduate.

On this Idaho dirt farm the work is rugged, the summer growing season short, and the ground rocky. Just twenty years ago most of the Larsen operation was covered with the endless, gray sagebrush that sent wagon train pioneers



hurrying on to Oregon. "There is no typical day," says Susan. "The hardest thing about farm life is the irregular schedule. You do what needs to be done and when it needs doing."

It's a challenging life. With farm prices as low as they have been for the past two years, it can be very discouraging. There has to be a reason why someone would choose this kind of occupation, especially if he could be doing something else for a living. Even though Steve Larsen was raised on a farm, he had not planned on a farming career. His first dream was to become a doctor. As a pre-med student at Ricks College, where he met Susan, then later at BYU, he majored in zoology and chemistry.

There were no accessible paths open to medical school, however, and he decided to enter BYU's Master of Business Administration Program.

Two years later MBA grad Steve Larsen began searching for a satisfying life's work. It was only natural that the two companies expressing the greatest interest in this former farm boy's services were a manufacturer of tractors and a large egg producer. Steve opted for eggs. But he discovered that a career as an egg producer wasn't what he wanted either.

His parents had once advised him against farming. But an improved market in the early seventies prompted his parents to change their advice and Steve to accept his father's offer. "Farming?" Some friends asked. "Why throw away your education? When most MBA

graduates are destined to become insurance executives or bank presidents, who would choose to become a dirt farmer?"

Oddly enough, it wasn't the city friends who asked these questions; they dreamed of a place in the country for themselves. It was the farmers back home who wondered, "What are you doing here? How could you possibly come back?"

In spite of this homecoming, in July 1973 Steve began a new career as managing partner of Larsen Farms—two farms totaling 1,000 acres and worth well over \$1 million. In an operation this size he felt sure his professional training as a

business manager would not be wasted.

The main reasons for returning centered around the family. A sense of roots and perhaps destiny helped draw them back to the Blackfoot area. In 1918 Grandfather J. Berkeley Larsen brought a reluctant

bride from Salt Lake City to a little shack on a plot of land west of the Blackfoot River. From this humble beginning he became a successful farmer and leader. In addition to 30 years as president of the Shelley Stake, he completed a term as Lieutenant Governor of the State of Idaho.

Steve's father, Allan Larsen, likewise chose a career in farming, church work, and public service. While maintaining a major interest in Larsen Farms, he is also part owner of the local John Deere tractor and farm implement dealership. He is currently president of the Blackfoot West Stake and is serving as Speaker of the Idaho House of Representatives. And with



early, widespread support for the Republican nomination, Allan Larsen may be a candidate for the governor's office.

In view of the developing family traditions, it is not unusual that Steve Larsen chose to follow his father and grandfather into farming as well as church service and politics. Neither is it surprising that he has already achieved success in these areas. Despite a depressed market, Larsen Farms is profitable. It is a large operation, employing as many as 25 farm workers at the peak season.

Among these workers Steve and Susan found many who were interested in learning about the LDS Church. Working with the full-time missionaries, they took an active role in teaching these investigators. Seventeen of them were baptized in 1977. For Steve it was a continuation of the work he enjoyed during his two-year service in the Central British Mission.

Bishop of the Moreland Second Ward for the past two and a half years, Steve reports monthly to his father, the stake president. Susan shares her husband's enthusiasm for service. She teaches the Spiritual Living class in Relief Society and is vice president of the local PTA.

Steve, like his father, is active politically, even though he was defeated for the school board in the most recent election. He serves as Republican Precinct Committeeman for Moreland. In addition, he is the state vice-president of the Underground Pumpers Association, an organization trying to hold down electrical rate hikes that discriminate against farmer's seasonal use of electrical pumps to irrigate their fields. It is a matter of great



concern—the Larsen power bill last year was over \$11,000.

But there was more than a family legacy calling the Larsens back to the farm. In the city they had begun to lose touch with each other. After school the children scattered to the homes of their friends. Father kept long office hours, with an

hour and a half spent commuting to and from work each day. Now Steve is almost always within view of the family's new house, located next to the gravel county road bordering their farm. They enjoy meals together and they work together, whether it's planting flowers in the yard, weeding in the garden, picking rocks, or harvesting potatoes.

From January to February Steve spends most of his time on such things as planning budgets, preparing bids on fertilizer, and attending farm seminars. In March the seed potato, wheat, and barley he's had in storage since last autumn are sorted and delivered to customers. Then comes the spring plowing, disking, and planting.

May through July he supervises irrigation by means of movable hand lines and wheel lines. Water for the fields is pumped from deep wells tapping the Snake River Aquifer, a huge underground reservoir. There is also summer cultivation and weed control. From August to mid-October it's time to harvest, first the grain and then the potatoes, with a few days out for cutting and baling hay. After the harvest, the certified seed potatoes, his major crop, pack the new steel-frame "spud cellar" that measures nearly 60 yards in length.

Finally from mid-October through December he turns the soil and uses a claw-like ripper behind a

powerful 4-wheel-drive tractor to break up rock in the fields. The large pieces of rock that surface will be gathered and buried in a deep hole. By Christmas, if snow hasn't covered the ground, the short green shoots of winter wheat will be visible over some 80 acres.



the valley, and the beauty was in the sky."

Four and one-half years later, the Larsens are confident they made the right decision in becoming farmers. "It's satisfying work, and it allows a person to become involved in

other things." said Steve.

In the back yard there is a gymnastic set and swings Steve built for the kids, also volleyball standards and a tether ball. One day there will be a trampoline, a place to play basketball, and maybe even a tennis court. According to Susan, "We're trying to set things up so we don't have to go anywhere to have a good time."

Besides spending more time together, the children have an excellent opportunity to learn values like industry and thrift. The two oldest daughters, Stephani (11) and Shauntel (10) pull wild oats, sort potatoes, and help with other farm chores. With the income from their work they buy their own clothes and manage their own savings accounts.

There were many advantages to their new life style, but it wasn't easy for Susan getting used to the flat landscape of their Idaho farm. Coming directly from the Salt Lake Valley, she missed the Wasatch Mountains.

"I could see nothing here," said Susan. "Then one day I went to take the garbage out and a hawk flew overhead. I glanced up and I saw the clouds for the first time. And I saw the skyline. I saw that you could see for hundreds of miles. The sky was clear and the clouds were billowing and I realized that I had not seen the beauty of this country. I had been looking for some mountains, for



Contrary to what some friends felt, his MBA training has been valuable, primarily in the financial analysis and management of the total operation, but also in marketing their farm products and supervising employees.

What's in the future? "We're happy here," he concludes. "We'll probably take on a few more acres, build more equity in the farm for ourselves." Between running a family, farm, and ward and emulating the accomplishments of his grandfather and father, Steve Larsen has his life's work cut out for him. David Johnson

[June 1978: Dad] Thanks to Mom's patience and endurance I will get a letter in this month. It doesn't seem possible but each month gets more hectic and full. This last month I have gone to Pocatello more than any other month of my life. I spent a couple days there as one of the

delegates from Bingham County to the Republican State Convention. That is really a choice experience. It is really a witness to me of the divinity of our Constitution and the reality of the voice of the people being expressed through the party political system.

A couple of days of hearings before the Idaho Public Utilities Commission were the other reason for going to Pocatello. In



my responsibility as Vice President of the Idaho Irrigation Pumper's Association it was a real opportunity to testify before

the PUC in their hearings regarding Utah Power and Light Company's request for power rate increases that would increase pumper's power costs 90%.

On the farm we have been getting the sprinklers repaired and going, cleaning up the last of the potatoes that were left over, paying big fertilizer and chemical bills, cultivating potatoes, spraying grain, etc., etc, and etc.

Each of the kids is growing up in so many ways. Rick will even hardly know them. But they are sure faithful about remembering you in their prayers, Rick. In fact, while I am thinking about it I have a special message to Rick: In promulgating your esoteric cogitations, or articulating your superficial sentimentalities or amicable, philosophical, or psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your conversational communications possess a clarified conciseness, a complicated comprehensibleness, and a concatenated cogency. Eschew all conglomerations of flatulent garrulity, jejune babbelment, and asinine affectations." We love you and are proud of the kind of missionary you are.

Stephen and David are getting into their Cub Scouting. They started with a bicycle rodeo and are completing their requirements for the Bobcat badge. I am looking forward to interviewing and baptizing them right away. For their birthday we let them have a slumber party and each have

four friends come over. As they get older they are getting more controllable and tolerable in such situations. Well, I had better sign off for now. It's only two weeks until the next month's letter is due to be written. We love you all. Steve, Sue, etc.

Someone once said that when something momentous happens, a person will be able to look back and remember what they were doing when they heard about it. That was definitely the case for me on June 12, 1978.

[June, 1978: Mom's journal] The following few days have given me cause to reflect and wonder at the day and time in which we live. Friday afternoon Barbara called and told me she had heard that President Kimball had announced that blacks could now hold the priesthood. I thought it must be some sort of joke. Further investigation proved that truly it was true. Now for the first time since Cain they can receive all the temple blessings. It still has me in a state of wonderment. Who can guess what far reaching ramifications this will have. I have spent considerable time these last few days evaluating my own prejudices regarding these people. I have felt hesitations regarding them but now feel to ask myself, "Who am I to want to withhold the Lord's blessings from anyone when He has so abundantly blessed me?" I am hopeful that I will gain a confirmation of my acceptance of this.

Within a short while the following letter arrived to be read at the pulpit over the signature of President Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, and Marion G. Romney:

"To All General and Local Priesthood Officers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Throughout the World: Dear Brethren:

As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that people of many nations have responded to

the message of the restored gospel and have joined the Church in ever-increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple.



Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known His will for the blessing of all His children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of His authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel."

[August 13, 1978: Dad] *Whenever it comes to writing like this, I can't help remembering what I heard Dad say once about writing his life story: "I am too busy living it to write about it." He sure is busy living life to the full! It was a real thrill to be able to join with him, Mom, Karen, and Gary in Boise Tuesday night to await the outcome of the primary election. What a thrilling and exciting time to be with Dad in his hour of victory! In a very real sense it seemed to be a victory of righteousness and truth over the forces of evil attempting to gain control of this state.*

Thursday I conducted a funeral for a wonderful lady, Elaine Walters. She wasn't in our ward very long but we had gotten to know her quite well and to respect her for her talents and previous contributions. She has published a small book of her poetry as well as having contributions published in many leading magazines. Here is a short piece of hers entitled, "The Mission of a Tear."

*"Young April wept, her splashing tears
loved flowers, shrub and tree.*

*She washed each secret violet face with
cunning artistry.*



She filled a tulip's scarlet cup to wet a robin's whistle;

Then pinned (with cautious fingertips) a diamond in a thistle."

Thursday and Friday was also our leadership training seminar in West Yellowstone for all of our new youth leaders. It was a real success and enjoyed by all. The testimony meeting Friday morning was worth the whole effort.

What a thrill to come home Friday to see our recently returned Korean. Rick really looked great! My initial impression was how clean he looked—clear through. Just looking at him made me ask myself if I am that pure of thought and motive. Am I scrubbed that clean by the love of repentance?

The farm is looking good. We have erected another grain bin. That makes seven where there were originally three. The Americans outnumber the Chiefs now. The vagaries of the weather have had an effect upon us. We have had a hail storm which really beat down the potatoes and it has been unseasonably cold already, nipping the tops of the vines and just about totaling out the

beans in our garden and our corn.

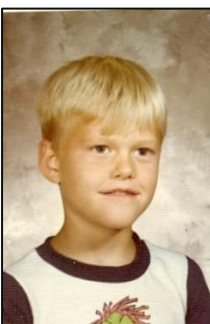
The kids are all growing so fast. It doesn't seem possible that we have five get on the school bus each morning. John is really a good help with all the older kids gone and Michael is on the road to being potty trained. Number eight is scheduled to arrive in a month. "All is well in Zion." Love to all.

Steve

[September 10, 1978: Dad] *Because of the Blackfoot Northwest Stake having conference in our building we don't have any meetings this morning. It seems so unusual to be able to hear the Tabernacle Choir Broadcast and have a quiet morning listening to beautiful music, reading, taking some time with the kids and so on. It has filled me with conflicting feelings of peace and impatience.*

Peace from the balm of soothing, soul-stirring music. Peace from the sounds of children playing quietly, reading, and figuring tithing on babysitting money. Peace from the sounds and smells of dinner being prepared. Peace coming from the sure knowledge of family love and security. Peace and gratitude welling up from deep within my soul for the many blessings from my Heavenly Father—a real loving Savior, testimony of the gospel, loving parents, dedicated help meet, caring brothers and sisters and in-laws, unbelievable choice sons and daughters, food and shelter, and freedom to think, act, vote, speak, write, etc.

I have been reading a collection of escape stories compiled by Reader's Digest which has stirred a greater appreciation for the freedoms we enjoy and what many would sacrifice to eat the crumbs from our table. Roman Rolland defining



man's greatest needs in "Jean-Christophe" used these words, "Life, love of life, and the courage to pursue it."

My feelings of impatience have been two fold. The weather hasn't been very cooperative for haying and combining grain lately and so much of my impatience has to do with all that needs to be done for this harvest and a concern lest we fail to harvest all of our crops in a timely manner. The other aspect of my impatience has to do with myself. Why can't I discipline myself to do all that I know I should? Why do I still harbor a few transgressions I am unwilling to give up? I don't have the healthy feelings of striving and growing spiritually that I like to feel. I am impatient with myself for apparently being content with the plateau I have reached and allowing external circumstances to box me in, in a sense.

The theme for our next month's ward paper is: "The road to wisdom? Well, it's plain and simple to express: Err and err and err again but less and less and less." Perfection requires a constant striving, growing from "grace to grace", never content with the status quo.

Well, to change gears, we are getting excited about the imminent arrival of another honored



guest. Susan has been extremely uncomfortable the last few weeks and we know that deliverance is nigh! Michael is progressing quickly in his



potty training. John is really a good helper with all the rest of the kids in school. Stephani got beat out by Tate Clements in her try for student body president at Riverside. Shauntel decided not to run this year as she was the fourth grade representative on the student council last year. Stephen and David lucked out and didn't get Mr. Witt as they feared they would. Becky is thrilled with being able to read.

We have 250 acres of grain left to combine; 50 acres of second crop hay to cut, 80 acres to bale, and 140 acres to haul; and 230 acres of potatoes to dig. All of this should be done within the next 40 days along with some deep ripping, disking, and miscellaneous other little tasks. (And it looks like rain again!) It is so good to hear from each of you and feel of your spirits in these monthly letters. Let's pray for each other, too.

[September 12, 1978: Mom's journal] I spent this morning in the doctor's office. Dr. Haddock thought if everything checked out today that he would induce labor. After my examination he said he still felt we should wait another week. He feels the baby is small and needs time to grow. I was disappointed but have felt a comforting spirit attend me these past days. Sunday night we had the home teachers in and Steve gave me a blessing. He said that another choice spirit was waiting to join our family soon. It is hard to visualize another child who could possibly bring as much joy as the seven others. We truly do have "joy and rejoicing in our posterity."

We have thrown around a lot of names. We are all expecting this to be a girl. So far Lindsay and Ann are our favorites for a girl and Paul Archibald is the boy's name. Who knows!

It's still raining outside and has been for the last week. Everything is soaked through. With so many crops still unharvested it is a source of great concern to us. We're praying that this front will move out so we can continue the harvesting. The kids are anxious for spud harvest. They really enjoy the excitement of it all. I'm just wanting to get this new baby here. Maybe tonight!

[September 24, 1978: Mom] *Well, the baby arrived Sept. 19th at 6:44 p.m. He has lots of dark hair and dark eyes. I went in last Tuesday and although Dr. Haddock felt the baby was really small, he sent me over to the hospital to get going. After checking my blood they found I was anemic but proceeded with the induction when*



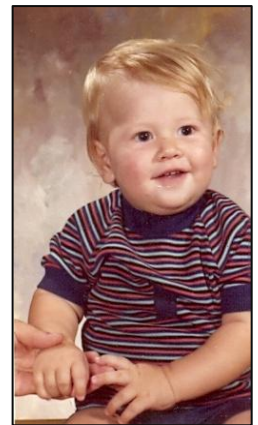
all the factors were considered. I lay most of the day with pains five minutes apart and it wasn't until he ruptured my membranes that the pains started getting hard. Paul was born 45 minutes later.

What a thrill to give birth to another beautiful baby. Of all the wonderful experiences life can offer, surely having a new little one must be the most marvelous. Steve didn't see this one born as he was home helping Mom with the kids but he came shortly thereafter and we shared the hours following Paul's birth together.

As was always the case, my mother came to help me during my recovery time. She not only lifted my burdens physically but often would share insights and stories that would strengthen me spiritually. One night after the kids were in bed and we were sharing a quiet time together she told me the following story:

Her father had been a railroad man. Their family lived in Pocatello during the Great Depression and didn't own a car and so her Dad walked to and from work each day. During the winter months he would often return from work after dark. On these occasions he would use his railroad lantern to light his way home. Mother, then a small child, remembered standing by the window, watching out into the dark night for the first sign of her father's approach. And then she would see the lantern. It would be swaying in the night air and become brighter as her father got closer and her anticipation grew. And then, finally he was there and she was in his strong and loving arms.

Well, the years passed and this daily ritual was all but forgotten. Mother grew up and married and was soon raising a family of her own. When my sister, Kathy, had her first baby she lived in Anaheim, California so Mother made arrangements to take the bus from Shelley, Idaho to Anaheim. She traveled to Salt Lake City and there made a bus transfer and continued on to Anaheim, expecting to arrive at the designated bus stop at about 7:00 a.m. the next morning where Kathy's husband, Dick, would pick her up.



About two in the morning Mother realized that something wasn't right. Anaheim was only a short distance away and it was five hours earlier than Kathy and Dick were expecting her. She realized that somehow she had gotten on the wrong bus. As she talked this through with the bus driver, he empathized with her predicament but said he was unable to help her. Soon the bus arrived at the stop, a park bench along the side of the busy freeway, and she disembarked.

There she was, alone in the middle of the night at the side of the freeway, without a phone and any way to notify Kathy and Dick that she was there. As she sat on the bench, fear filled her heart. If someone did stop to offer assistance, how would she know if they were trustworthy? She began to pray and pleaded with the Lord to help her know what to do. As she waited she soon became aware of a small light in the distance. In fascination she watched as the light became brighter. There was something familiar about it and the way it swayed in the darkness. And then a memory from her childhood came into her mind: the memory of watching for her father's lantern as he returned from work.

Soon the lantern and the man holding it came into view across the freeway. He was a railroad man on his way to work and instinctively she knew that he was someone she could trust. She called out to him and asked for help and he crossed over the freeway and helped her get to a place where she could make a phone call.

As mother told me this story she concluded by saying, "Only a loving and very personal God would have known that I would trust a man with a lantern. He knew me and knew how to meet my needs." I've always appreciated Mom sharing that story with me. It is such a testimony of the Lord's watch care and love for us individually.



It might be of interest to mention a dream I had before I got pregnant with Paul. Since our lives were so hectic and our family numbered nine, I wondered if we should consider our family complete. One morning Steve got up very early to go bale hay and I roused for a few minutes when he went out but then went back to sleep. I had a dream and the only thing that I can remember from it was that I was trying to find out whether I should have any more children. I don't remember

much about the circumstances of the dream but I do remember the phrase that came to me. It was, "Not a burden, but a blessing!" I awoke and felt certain that I had received my answer. I've thought about that phrase many times as I raised Paul. He was such a joy. He was so good-natured that he would even put himself down for a nap or cuddle up beside me when I was ready for one. He has truly been a fulfillment of my dream!

[September 29, 1978: Mom's journal] *I'm alone tonight for a moment. The children are in bed and even little Paul is asleep. He is such a joy! The other children, especially John and Michael are still having a few emotional times over this*

new addition, but then, so is their mother. Steve is still working on spud equipment, trying to get going tomorrow so he can leave things to go to Conference in Salt Lake this Saturday and Sunday. It's always such a hard time to get away.



Last Saturday we nearly had a tragic accident. Max and Irene Garner came to visit and during the course of their visit, Steve came rushing in on his way to town. He was trying to get into the barber before it closed and so he was in a hurry. Max could see his pickup needed to be moved so Steve could back the car out. All the kids were out playing and so both Max and Steve checked to see that no one was in back of the vehicles. It wasn't until both vehicles started backing out that I spotted Michael under the pickup crawling, trying to reach safety. My heart leaped, I screamed, but Max didn't realize anything was wrong until he got the pickup moved and got out. Somehow Michael had avoided being run over or dragged. He was badly shaken as was I.

[October 23, 1978: Mom's journal] *Still in spuds. Michael went to bed crying tonight. The harvest has dragged on so long that we are all ready to be finished and live like a family again. It has been a trying time for Steve. The ground was so rocky that we could hardly get through it. Thank goodness for beautiful fall weather. It has been one of the warmest falls we've had for a long time. We've harvested some good crops this year...now if we can just market them wisely.....Steve is still out on the combine. Just a couple more days and we'll be through. Hurray!*

With the harvest of '78 nearly over we made plans to join Barbara and Allan in Boise for election night. The following journal entry was made the week following the general election.

[November 12, 1978: Mom's journal] *It's my birthday today—33 years old. This past week seemed so sad. Tuesday afternoon we drove to Boise to be with Allan and Barbara for the election returns. We stayed in the Downtowner with the other's (Gary and Linda, Staff and Kathy,*



Karen, Rick, Ron and Janeice Bair, and John and Margaret Ashby). It was exciting to be there but so disappointing as we watched the votes being tallied. About 2:00 a.m. we gave up hope of a victory. Allan was trailing by about 30,000 votes. The next morning we read in the paper that John Evans had won. It was such a difficult defeat for Allan and one that took him many years to get over.

[December 4, 1978: Dad] *It doesn't seem possible but one more year and we will have a teenager! Today is Stephani's 12th birthday. She and Shauntel are both growing up to be such lovely little ladies. We are so proud of them. They are such good help around the house and are learning to cook and take care of the baby and everything.*

Stephen and David have started stamp collecting so if you have any unwanted stamps floating around send them to us. They are really involved and enjoying their Cub Scouts work. It is really rewarding for me to be able to work with them on their requirements and see them learn and grow. The Pine-Wood Derby is coming up in January and so we will soon be building cars together, too.

Most of the time it is hard to believe that we have eight children; it doesn't really seem like

that many. Times like shopping for Christmas and groceries are enough to convince, though. It sure takes a lot to be able to provide for a family of this size. And they are starting to really stow away the groceries! Sometimes I wonder how Mom ever filled up all us big kids.

Thanksgiving was such a delight, to have the whole family together again after so many years. It is said that absence makes the heart grow fonder but I think it causes the heart to wander. We need this contact and association together to renew and strengthen our feelings of love and mutual respect.

Our family has outgrown our dining table even without the youngest two being up to the table yet. So I am in the process of making us a larger table. It is 9'x5' compared to our present 3'x6'. It is rounded on the ends and will have a lazy Susan in the middle. Dale Thayne will help me put on the Formica, a pretty Spanish oak, and I will be able to use the legs off the old table. We are really excited about our new family table!

Friday we went through the temple with Sonja Heady and Kim Robertson as they were married. (She is a lovely girl from our ward with a nonmember father and an inactive mother.) It was a thrill to see her make it to the temple without any support from home. Saturday I performed the wedding of Emily Aoyogi and Daunt Whitman—a nice Presbyterian from Boise. What a striking difference between a worldly wedding and one in the temple. I pray that our two unmarried siblings will make it to the temple and in the near future we can all go there together as a family. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. Love, Steve, Sue, et al

1979

*Steve continues as Bishop

*Separation of two farming operations

*Allan returns to farming full time

* Spanish missionary effort intensifies

*Steve starts working for Farm Bureau

When Allan lost his gubernatorial race, he came back to farm full-time. It had been a rough few years with low prices for our crops and Allan was understandably distraught that the farm wasn't thriving. But, with potatoes selling at \$2.25/hundred, it was tough to make a profit.

One day after an especially difficult week, a knock came at our door. It was Barbara with a delicious dessert in hand. We visited for a while and then she left. She hadn't said much but I knew why she had come. She knew that things were tense between us and Allan and she just wanted to reaffirm that despite what was going on with the farm, we were all family, and family was the most important thing. She was setting an example of love and forgiveness; a message that her love for us was stronger than the squabbles we were having. She was so good that way. No matter what happened in our extended family, she loved us and that was a constant.

As is easy to imagine, handling all the demands of work, Church, and home was challenging. The following is an essay written by John about his Dad. *Dad is a man who loves God. I remember going into his office as a young boy and feeling like it was a special place. He had gold curtains which gave the room a yellowish glow and on his wall hung a picture of the Savior in Gethsemane. He taught me who Jesus was and took every opportunity to teach me more about him. We read scriptures together as a family and held family home evening so the chances to talk about the gospel were many. He would call us together daily to have family prayer. I remember him serving as bishop in the ward when I was very young and later in various other positions in the Church and he has always been an example to me of one who would magnify his callings. I can*



see that because of his love for the Lord he wants to serve Him.

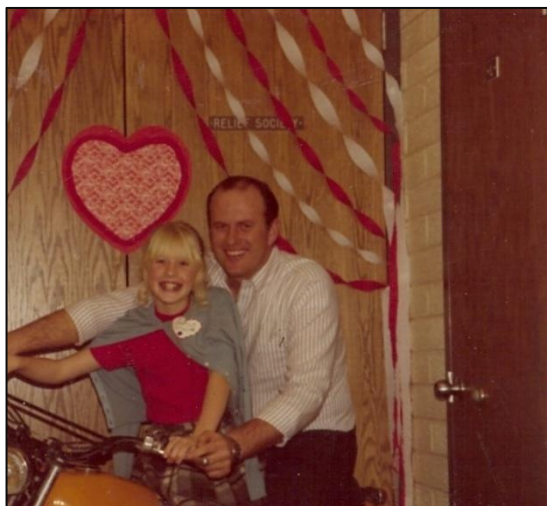
[Spring, 1979: Dad]

There are times when times are so busy and hectic that this letter only

comes as the fruits of love for family and especially for Mother. I would like to apologize to Mark, Rita, Jeanie, Scott, (the outlying Larsen remnant) for being part of the reason there wasn't a letter last month.

A couple of weeks ago when Susan and I went to the temple we were given the opportunity of being the witness couple. It was the first time since just shortly after we were married. It seemed to add so much more meaning to that session for us and we came away filled with the Spirit and again marveling at the beauty of the endowment and the magnitude of the covenants and blessings that are the heart and soul of it. I hope some time we can all be at the temple together and feel together the strength and power of the priesthood sealing with which we are bound as a family forever.

We have been trying the last little while especially hard to sell our seed potatoes and the market seems to keep slipping. It now looks like if we can sell for \$3.00 we will be lucky. By the way, we do have some sold but not nearly as many as we would like to at this point in the game.



Two of the most special experiences last month were the Pinewood Derby and the Merrie Miss daddy-daughter date. The boys and I really enjoyed making their derby cars and it was amazing, the first time down the track they raced neck and neck all the way. Even though they are quite different in design they were almost identical in performance. The boys did quite well in the racing but they didn't win any prizes.

For the daddy-daughter date we had a little problem with only one Dad for two Merrie Miss girls. So Stephani asked Rick if he would go with her. We had a real fun time with a lovely dinner, fun games, and learning to jitter-bug. Rick said it was one of the most fun times he had had since

he had come home and that he didn't feel at all out of place with all the Dad's.

Another momentous event was the marriage of Kevin Lott, my full-time hired man. He has a real sweet little wife and will be a real asset to the ward.

The Moreland 2nd Ward veterans team won first place in the stake

basketball tournament but we were beat out in the first two games of the regional's. I really enjoyed playing this year and had some of the best games of my life. I guess some things do improve with age.

Forgive all the typing and spelling errors and accept this message of love from the Stephen Larsen family.

[April 2, 1979: Dad] *Wasn't conference beautiful! It is such a thrill to be right there seated at the feet of the Brethren. It is certainly stimulating to me and fills me with a greater resolve to live worthy of the blessings promised in*

my patriarchal blessing. I even had the privilege of shaking hands with Elder L. Tom Perry and Elder Boyd K. Packer and President Dallin H. Oaks. How blessed we are to have a father who associates regularly with these great men and can counsel and lead his family in righteousness. I was so buoyed up it didn't even bother me to have to change a blown out tire in a snowstorm (in my suit) alongside the freeway on my way home Sunday afternoon.



Our ward conference was held last month. It is rewarding to have a ward that is doing so well in relation to the rest of the stake. The stake people are so complimentary of our auxiliaries. It did seem a little different to not have Dad as the visiting stake president.

We also had a unique event one Monday night—a ward family talent night. We had a real good turnout and everyone was pleasantly surprised by the quality and variety of talent expressed.

Another exciting element of this month has been the resurrection of the Spanish missionary program. We have a tremendous elder here with a lot of enthusiasm, imagination and drive. He was transferred from the Texas El Paso Spanish mission. We have already baptized seven Mexicans and the work is just beginning. We have three Mexicans who are members of the Church working for us and they seem quite sweet and conscientious. We had a fireside in our home Sunday night with over 30 people there, including the mission president, Richey Marbury III, and his wife.

[June, 1979: Dad] It is virtually impossible to keep you posted on all the news. It would take a letter or two a week. We are certainly grateful for the media of expression and the faithfulness of each of you in writing. Our biggest news is the possibility of our family having an Abraham. We

volunteered for the Indian Placement Program. Last Thursday Brother Dayton came by to meet our family and said he had a 10 year old Sioux girl from North Dakota named Lora Lee Abraham for us. We are all so excited and pray that she gets on the bus in August. He said she is pretty, very shy, has no father, her mother is an alcoholic, and she has only been in the Church for about a month.

It was good for us almost all to be able to get together last week. We sure missed Staff and Kathy. I hope the next time we go to the temple we can all be there. There was something about having family there that really made that a special session.

One of my pipe movers quit to go back to Mexico last week and so for a couple of days I was back in the harness moving 12 lines a day. That really lets you know what kind of shape you are in!



I have had more problems in the ward lately than ever before. I told President Williams I had more problems this last four weeks than I did the four years since being put in as bishop. He said that was true throughout the stake. Satan is very real and definitely not giving up here. Love you all.

By June the decision was made to separate our two farming operations. After talking it through with Allan, we decided to farm our own place (320 acres we had purchased a year earlier from Leigh Bair) and lease equipment from him.

It was while Steve was bishop that we made the decision to take an Indian student into our home

through the Indian Placement Program. This program encouraged Indian children who were members of the Church to leave their families and live with foster member families for the school year and then return to the reservations for summer. This program was initiated because Spencer W. Kimball saw the need for the Indian children to receive better schooling. My parents had participated in this program for several years and Allan and Barbara had also taken in a young boy.

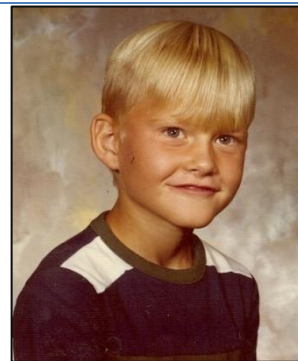
As Bishop, it was Steve's responsibility to find homes in our ward for at least two students. One day he approached me about taking a child into our home. I questioned the advisability of such a decision, considering our financial situation and "full nest." As we visited further, he again expressed that he felt we should and I agreed to give it a try. We made application and attended orientation meetings and got licensed as a foster care home through L.D.S. Social Services. The case worker that was assigned to us was Brother Everett Dayton.



The following August ('79) we prepared for her arrival. The day before the students came, we received a phone call telling us that our student, Lori Lee Abraham, had failed to get on the bus. It was with mixed feelings that the family received the news, but I felt a huge relief.

In October the Church meetings were consolidated into a three-hour block on Sundays. Prior to this announcement priesthood meeting and Sunday School were on Sunday morning, sacrament meeting, Sunday evening; MIA on Tuesday evening;

Primary, after school on Tuesday or Wednesday, and Relief Society on Wednesday morning. As is evident, it kept us coming and going for most of the week. The consolidation was a wonderful change and although at first it seemed like an awfully long three hours, it simplified things for all of us, especially those of us with young families.



As the winter of '79 approached, a close friend in our ward, Willis Burton, asked Steve if he would

consider selling insurance part-time to supplement his farm income. Willis was the manager for the Blackfoot Farm Bureau and needed an agent for the area. Steve agreed to give it a try for the winter months and took the job. His previous business management training came in handy and he passed his licensing tests with relative ease.

[November 1979: Dad] *So much has happened that last month's letter seems like it was three months ago. The Lord truly has blessed us this year. We are grateful for our good harvest and particularly that the weather cleared up enough*

that Gary and I were able to finish digging potatoes. My last day was a beautiful day with nearly ideal digging conditions. It helped erase memories of a few days before slipping and sliding around through the mud with an extra tractor pulling



the truck and sometimes the harvester to be able to keep moving.

We received a letter from Manuel Travino whom we baptized three summers ago. He is president of the Dalles 2nd Branch. What a thrill to realize the small influence we can have in bolstering the Church in Mexico.

We are proud of our kids. The ones in school are doing so well. Mrs. Painter told Stephani she is the top girl in the whole 7th grade. Mrs. Benson said that only one other girl is anywhere near Shauntel in the 6th grade. The twins are doing well and are the best behaved boys in their grade. Becky's teacher thinks she is a genius and says she has never had a student as capable as Becky. John is enjoying kindergarten. Michael is the best little thumb-sucker we've raised and Paul is finally walking.

Yesterday I took some insurance tests and may soon be an agent for Farm Bureau to support my farming habit. The ward is growing. Last week we had 516 to sacrament meeting. Part of them was from Bishop Harrington's ward who were joining us because they didn't have any power in their building. Keep the faith—we'll hear from you next month.

[December 1979: Dad/Bishop's Christmas letter to ward members]

One of my favorite stories in the Book of Mormon is that of the 2,000 young Ammonite men who joined the Nephite army to fight in the defense of their families, beliefs, and way of life. The description of them in Alma 53:20 is as follows: "And they were all young men, and they were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted."

The demands of the times in which we live require an army of men, women, and children who are "exceedingly valiant for courage". We need men with the courage to be totally honest and fair in all of their dealings, especially with the Lord, and with courage to take the spiritual lead of their families in calling the family together for prayers, home evenings, blessings when appropriate, regular personal interviews, and being responsible for the reverence and behavior of their families at all Church meetings and activities.

We need women with the courage to have their families and then to teach them by precept as well as by example; with courage to guard their thoughts about others and what they say so that they are the epitome of dignity, pose, and beauty for all the world to behold.

We need young men and women with the courage to say "no" to the temptations of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and sex as flaunted by the world; who have courage to not "bear hug", to not slough Sunday School and mutual classes, to be reverent and respectful of sacred things, and to not bow to the pressures of friends and peers to do things contrary to the dictates of their consciences and the teachings of their parents.

We need children with the courage to be obedient to their parents; to work hard at whatever tasks are given them, and to honor and respect the Lord's property and His servants, their teachers and leaders.

Lord has given each of us a trust to execute in this life. It takes courage and conviction to be "true at all times" to that trust. Can it be said of you that you are "true at all times in whatsoever thing (you are) entrusted?"

Gratitude should fill our hearts as we give thanks for our homes, our families, our fields, our

harvest, and our testimonies of the gospel. As this year draws to a close, may this flow of gratitude swell the seeds of courage and commitment as we resolve to be more valiant warriors in the mortal conflict with Satan and his hosts, both seen and

unseen. I so bless you in the name of Jesus Christ, our valiant captain. Amen



One of the highlights of the season was the presence of family and loved ones in our home on two consecutive nights. Christmas Eve we invited Mom and Dad, Karen, Rick, Elder Beamer, Elder Frijoles, and a couple of real fine Mexicans from Aberdeen. It

was a real enjoyable time for all of us. And then Christmas Day eve, Gary and Linda and family and Mom, Dad, and Rick were here. I think we all had plenty to eat, good conversation, and Rick enjoyed the football game.

Our ward Christmas party was a tremendous success—one of the best yet. We had over 400 people there. We also had a nonmember, Wilber Trupp play Santa. He made an excellent Santa and it was the first time we have been able to get him involved in anything sponsored by the Church. When he and his wife, Bubbles, moved here they made it quite plain they would be good neighbors but to never mention the Church.

Tithing settlement went very well and we had a record turnout and excellent response to the budget and building funds. I had a new experience—someone wanted to pay his tithing in kind with some opals; they are beautiful! As a direct result of the success of our temple preparation class we have even been able to get a tithing settlement from a family that probably has never given anything but a few dollars fast offering in twenty or twenty-five years. There was such a sweet spirit in sacrament meeting last week and I felt it was because of the fact that virtually everyone there had been in my office within the last three days and had offered an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.

1980

- *Steve serves as bishop
- *Rick gets married on June 28th to Terry Hunt
- * Richards' reunion at Redfish Lake (July)
- * Grandpa and Grandma leave for Pakistan for 21 months (August)
- *Jonie Johnson joins our family on the Indian Placement Program (August)
- *Steve works for Farm Bureau and is farming his own 320 acres
- *Gary and Linda move into Moreland Second Ward
- *Receive offer on farm and home on desert

[January, 1980: Dad] *Happy New Year from the Taber Larsens! Let me extend to you the New Year's wish given to ward members as they left tithing settlement—"May this be a happy and prosperous new year and may your tithing double!"*

We certainly had a bounteous and joyful Christmas with new watches, cameras, clothes, dolls, trucks, games, etc. ad infinitum. We were also generously provided for with goodies, candies, and so on from friends and neighbors. We were thrilled with the personal investment of Gary and Linda in the lovely quilt they gave us.

We have been reading the Book of Mormon as a family each morning and this morning read a scripture that made me think of Rick because of the excellent choice of words—2 Nephi 22:6. Tonight we are going to “Fiddler On The



Roof” for home evening. The kids have been listening to the record and are all psyched up for it. We all send our love and best wishes for the “80’s.

That next year became a marathon for us all with the insurance business, family responsibilities, farming, being Bishop, and a new baby on the way.

[January, 1980: Mom] *Steve is still selling insurance, trying to prepare to farm again and busy trying to salvage several marriages in the ward.....Paul is cutting teeth hot and heavy and also cutting head, too. He fell into the table and had to be stitched up. It was pretty bloody and thrilling for all the kids to see. The stitches looked like a spider crawling across his forehead. The kids played that for all it was worth, too.*

I’ll have to tell you about Steve’s morning. Typical. He promised a missionary he’d go with him to the temple this morning. Realizing he had an insurance appointment at 8:00, he called last night to cancel that appointment so he could go. He arose at 4:00 a.m., got ready, went to missionary’s home.....no sign of life. He knocked quietly. Still no answer. Perhaps they had left without him. Perhaps they were

oversleeping. He wondered what to do. Oh well, he’d go ahead to the temple alone. Gets in pickup. Won’t start. What to do? Maybe if he can push it out onto the road he could get it going. Starts pushing. Sprains his back. Crippled up. Now what? Waits till missionary family arises. Pickup goes. Drives to church. Too late to go to temple. Besides has a 10:00 appointment so better stick around. Would like to attend meeting of spud growers but must be to 10:00 appointment in Moreland. 10:00: Appointment is broken. Man unable to be there. Too late to go to spud school. He called me at noon. “How’s your day, dear? I said. “Well, it’s a long story. To make it short. No missionary. No temple. No insurance. No spud school. Phone a chiropractor. Get a mechanic. The price of grain went down. (Mother told me there’d be days like this!)

Of course our involvement with the Mexican missionary effort continued and often required time and resources that were stretched to the limit. Many times I acted as a chauffeur in our Beauville 12-passenger van, helping get them back and forth to their Sunday meetings. One fellow, Ediberto, would come from Atomic City with a neighbor woman. I can’t remember the details of why they needed a ride home this particular Sunday, but I told them that I would

drive them to Atomic City. I had all the kids in the van including one or two of the Reid children whom I often took to church with us. We were driving on 900 West and I had Paul on my lap since it was in the days before there were car seats for infants. I think he was about nine months old. We were going about 45-50 m/p/hr and nearing the place where 900 West intercepts with Highway 26. I was holding Paul in my lap and steering with my right hand when I approached an S shaped turn. I was going too fast to make the turn just using one arm and the car left the road and started bumping through the sagebrush, heading for a stop sign. The first bump threw Paul and I out of our seat (this was in the day before there were seat belts) and onto the floor between the two front bucket seats. When I landed on the floor the car continued on and the kids were all screaming and bouncing all over the place.

All at once Ediberto yelled something at me and although it was in Spanish, I knew what he said. He said, "Push on the brake!" I remember looking at the pedals from my position on the floor and thinking, "Which one is the brake?" Then I figured it out and reached with my hand to push the brake. The car came to a halt inches from the stop sign.

When I got up off the floor and everyone settled

down, we drove the van out of the sagebrush and continued on our way to Atomic City. What a scare! We were so grateful that no one was hurt. (I have asked myself if I had been blessed with the gift of tongues on that occasion because I didn't speak Spanish and Ediberto didn't speak English and yet we communicated.) I don't ever remember him asking me for a ride again. (I wonder why?)

Because of the efforts of the many people in our stake, eventually a Spanish Branch was formed. We had mixed emotions about it since that meant that our ward would no longer have these special converts attending our meetings. I took my concerns to President Murdock of the stake presidency and he said that in their own branch, the Mexicans would have opportunities for service and leadership that they just couldn't have in an English-speaking ward. Although we knew that our ward would miss them, we supported the change and participated in the formation of the new branch.

Jay Callister was called as President with Wayne Lee as first counselor and Ruben Figaroa as second. Over the years the Branch has continued to grow, anchored by the more permanent residents and their families. We are grateful for the part we played in those early years.



It might be of interest to know that while working with these migrant workers we became aware of their situations back home and felt badly that so many of them had almost nothing in the way of worldly goods and very limited opportunity to advance because of their lack of schooling. This became such a concern for us that in his capacity as bishop Steve wrote a letter to F. Burton Howard of the First Quorum of Seventy who had recently been the visiting authority at our stake conference. He replied in a letter dated January 25, 1980:

I appreciate your concerns about Mexican migrant workers who do not have sufficient skills to adequately support their families.....In any event, we are studying some modifications of the Mexico school structure to possibly provide greater assistance to members of the Church similar to those that you describe. In all cases the bishop of a ward would have access to an educational counselor. Any member of the Church in Mexico who desired further information about the closest school, educational opportunities.....can easily get this information by contacting his bishop. It would appear that the best counseling you could give those with whom you work would be to discuss their needs and desires with the bishop of their ward in Mexico.



It was about 20 years later that President Hinckley introduced the Perpetual Educational Fund in General Priesthood Meeting. This revelation came as a wonderful blessing to all who struggle because of their lack of educational opportunities!

On June 27th, 1980 Steve's brother, Rick, married Terry Lee Hunt in the Idaho Falls Temple. A reception was held for them in Terry's ward in Pocatello that evening.

[August 9, 1980: Dad] *It was such a joy to be able to spend some time with you*



and your precious families last month. How acutely we felt the absence of Staff and Kathy and their little ones. We can survive quite a while on a diet of family letters after a choice familial feast like that few days.

Life has been full of reunions, parties, and activities for us this summer. Since the reunion we have had an Elder's quorum party at Willow Flats, down by Preston. It was a lovely evening with steak dinner and fireside program. Then

we had a reunion at Lagoon for Susan's mother's family and the same day (evening) a reunion in Salt Lake for Susan's dad's family. It was really special because Sue's folks are leaving the middle of this month to go to Pakistan for 21 months. Arch will be working with the Minister of Agriculture there. It will be a choice opportunity for them to see part of the world. They had an interview with a counselor in the International Mission Presidency while they were in Salt Lake and he visited with them about what they could

and couldn't do as far as proselytizing in a Moslem country.

The following week, Susan's family congregated at Red Fish Lake for three days. The kids had a real blast playing on the waterfront and we all enjoyed boating, water skiing (and nearly drowning in attempting to do so). We came home with several garbage bags full of



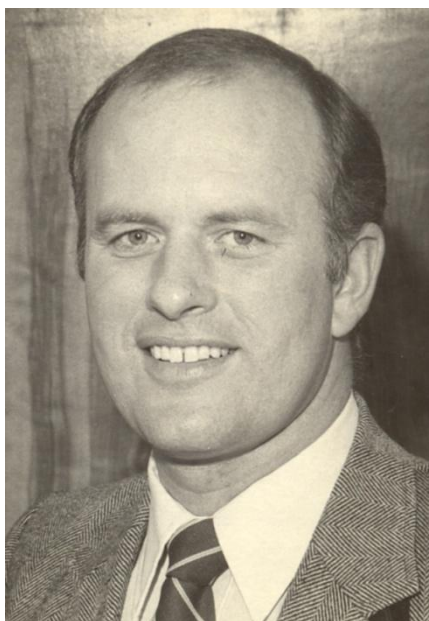
garage sale items and clothes that will be a real boon in clothing this family.

I also went with my priests for half of their pack trip into upper Palisades Lake. It seemed good to be able to use my saddle. We saw some really beautiful scenery and the fishing was terrific. The lake itself is one of the most beautiful, clean, emerald lakes I've ever seen.

The farm looks good with pretty respectable grain and hay crops. With decent prices we may be able to pay out this year. We are ready to start cutting grain (custom cutting) next Monday and are cutting second crop hay. The next few weeks will definitely make up for all our vacationing!

My insurance work has gone very well. Right now I am the company leader in new farm accounts for the whole state. I have quite a little pressure to do better as far as the life insurance production, however.

We are anticipating a new addition to our family in a few weeks. Jonie Johnson is 11 and an orphan. She lives with her older sister and her husband. This is her first year in the placement program. We pray that our association together will be mutually beneficial.



The kids are anxious to get back to school. Stephen and David have been moving one line of pipe each morning while I move my wheel lines, so they are looking forward to shutting pumps off and the coming harvest season. We will have the following in school: Stephani (8th), Shauntel (7th), Jonie (6th) Stephen and David (5th), Becky (3rd), John (1st), Michael (chief helper at home), and Paul (chief pest at home).

At this time my parents were going through a time of transition. My Dad worked most of his adult life for the Utah/Idaho Sugar Company but the company had been having problems and in '79 they closed their doors. This came at a bad time for my father who was just a couple of years away from retirement. Although he wouldn't lose his pension, he was out of a job and knew that he didn't have adequate in his retirement

fund to provide much of a living for them.

Some years earlier he had been approached by Harza International with an offer to go to Pakistan and teach crop improvement and land use. At the time this first offer came, Daddy felt that his family situation was such that it wasn't feasible to go. Now, with all the children married or off to college, he wondered if they should check into the offer again. When he notified Harza that he

was available, they offered him a job. He and Mom would go to Pakistan for 21 months and work with the Ministry of Agriculture teaching the farmers about raising sugar beets and managing their resources. Harza had just constructed a new dam and Dad was assigned to assist the Pakistani farmers to make the most of this new asset.

Daddy was excited about this opportunity but, of course, Mom had her reservations. She would be so far from any of her family, in a strange land, and in a very different culture. But, she also recognized that at Dad's age it was difficult to find work and she knew that he was excited about it. Both of them knew that the additional income would increase their retirement fund considerably and so it was decided that they would go.

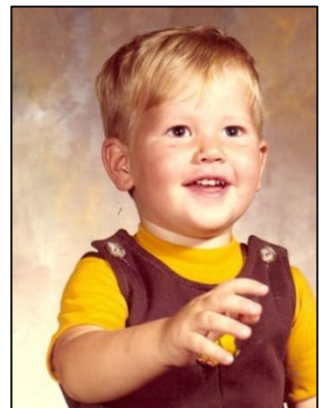
At the time they made this decision, they were living in Moses Lake, Washington. As you can imagine, preparations for this adventure began immediately and their life was turned upside down as they went through all the preparations for their departure. Household furnishings were sorted, some being stored while they were gone and some being shipped by ocean freighter to Pakistan. They applied for passports, got vaccinations, and purchased a two-year supply of medicines and other products that weren't available in Pakistan. At our family reunion in July at Red Fish Lake we all said our teary good-byes. They left in August of '80 and were gone

for 21 months.

Their time in Pakistan and the adventures they had there could fill a book. It was at once educational, frightening, interesting, shocking, saddening, and totally unlike anything they had ever experienced. They took hundreds of pictures, kept journals, mingled with the common folk, rubbed shoulders with the "upper crust", and many times were in harm's way.

They lived in Peshawar, Pakistan, a town of about 400,000 people. Daddy kept busy with his employment and thoroughly enjoyed his work, but Mom had a more difficult time. She missed her children and grandchildren and longed to be a part of their lives. Because of the distances involved, our only communication was through the postal service and the time that it took to get letters back and forth was about three weeks. Phoning was out of the question since it was about \$200/minute and none of us could afford that. This excerpt from one of her letters conveys her feelings:

"I've searched my soul to discover why I feel so all alone in this strange land when I know I have all of you, my family and dear husband. And then I realize it's because you're all so much a part of me, I can't let go. Your joys are mine...your sorrows, too. You have your lives to live and I must get on with mine. But time cannot take from me, nor change that God-given maternal love that binds you to me eternally. I love each of



you. Mother" (A comment by Dad at the bottom of this letter:) *"Our lives are ever so different from what we have known that it will take a while to adjust. As yet we do not have any friends and this is hard on Mom. I do have my work acquaintances."*

Another reason she struggled was because of her gender and the country's restrictions on women. She was permitted to go to the market place and be in public without wearing the traditional "borqa" but she couldn't help feeling self-conscious because of all the stares she got because of her Western-style clothes and her exposed face and head.

It was during the Afghanistan War and refugees escaping the war were flooding over the border to Pakistan by the thousands. Mother worked as a volunteer in a hospital for a while, helping the refugee women who came in to have their babies. She said that before they left they were given one diaper and one nightie for their newborn and then they would leave and try to survive amidst the chaos and poverty. In a letter dated September 25, 1981 she wrote about how heart-wrenching it was to see the poverty.

"Dear Daughters, How has your day been? Were you discouraged and blue? Do your tasks seem hopeless and continuous? May I share a few things with you. Many days I have sat and felt sorry for myself—poor me—no family around, no church, no telephone, no car, etc. Poor me. Then the other day as I was languishing in one of these moods, I looked out the window of my upstairs



bedroom and watched poor village women at their daily comings and goings. This is a man's world here. Some men go to work, but many others go up town and sit on a charboy (bed) and drink tea and visit with hundreds of other devoted husbands, father, and providers (?). Their wives stay home with the little ones, wash their rags in the canal, send the little girls (boys and men don't do this) out to gather up cow dung to mix with straw to dry on the side of the mud hut so that it can be burned in the winter for warmth and to cook the rice. Sometimes she herself goes when she isn't needed in the fields to carry large loads of sugar cane stalks. She carries a babe on her hips and wears a heavy warm

"burqa" that covers all of her, including her face (where she looks out through a mesh screen just big enough for her eyes.)

The weather is 110 degrees with 90% humidity in the summer. At night sometimes the children cry with hunger and she sits

and watches a small one suffer because there is no money to buy medical aid or medicine. Of course, these conditions bother her concerned husband, so many of them don't come home until late, and then they get up early and have a cup of tea and leave for a busy day of visiting on Jamrud road. This new day for the mother is the same as yesterday. No clothes for the children, very little food, but she faces the day. She's not happy, but then "Allah" will reward her with a good hereafter if she suffers here. (Of course, the men receive the same reward minus the suffering, but then that's her fault for being born a woman.) She knows each day will be the same—no hope for relief. She is pushed around, scoffed at, and

trampled on, not only by her husband sometimes, but by the lucky, smiled upon, well-to-do women. Life goes on and she exists day after day. Yes, daughters, how was your day? I fell to my knees and thanked a loving Father for my life and blessings. I asked forgiveness.

Dear Sons, Is the money hard to stretch? Are bills piling up? Are there little feet to shod and backs to clothe? Daddy says life isn't easy for a true provider. He has field assistants who have been employed for 27 years at one job without an increase in pay, recognition, or prestige, and still making 350 rupees (\$35) a month with no hope of advancement or increase in pay.

(Dad speaking) I had one of my good friends yesterday that calls me "dad", tell me that he has 11 children, a mother-in-law, and wife that he must provide for on his salary of 425 rupees (\$42.50) a month. He said he had to get up at 4 a.m. to get to his required meetings and to take care of his responsibilities. There is no time after hours to have a second job so his children are hungry sometimes and poorly clad and some of them haven't known what a pair of shoes was. This is typical of the working class of which I am familiar. They would do anything within their power to go to the U.S. or seek a new way of life, but unfortunately they are trapped in a situation which is beyond change. My heart aches for them, realizing there is little you can do to change their life. Food and clothing here cost about the same as there. Do you suppose that you could get by on \$42.50 a month? Surely we are blessed. Thank the Lord for his goodness and be not discouraged, but be of good cheer for He is on our side. If it was "Allah" you'd have nothing to give you courage and the will to live. God bless you.

Dear Grandchildren, You have been born of goodly parents in a free land. Your chances of surviving are 990 to 1 where in Pakistan about

one child in three dies before the age of eight. About 14% of the boys in Pakistan have an opportunity of an education. For the girls it's much less and only those with wealthy parents can afford such luxury. For those less fortunate, life's struggles requires that the young boys and girls be providers at the age of eight or nine years old, working as apprentices oft times without pay for several years to learn a trade.

Young girls are confined to drudgery, caring at the age of seven or eight for their little brothers and sisters in the family while mother works in the fields. When the little ones sleep, they are required to take the livestock to feed, see that all the cow dung is picked up and carried back to the house to use as fuel. Poor diet causes them to lose their teeth early. Legs are bowed because of lack of calcium and protein in the diet, and never knowing what it is to be told they are loved and appreciated. Not knowing where their next meal will come from. Hunger is constant. They live with little hope for a happy life.

Our dear grandchildren, they, too, are children of God and loved by him just as you are. Did you complain about the dinner Mother fixed or that your clothes are not Janzen brand or your tennis runners were bought at Sears? Or did you complain because you have a few household chores to perform for your allowance? When you pray tonight, thank the Lord for your blessings and smile at Mom and Dad and thank them for their love and care and concern. We love all of you very much. May God bless you. Mom and Dad....Grandma and Grandpa"

As part of their employment agreement, Mom and Dad were required to hire local help and so a house boy (man) was hired to do the cooking, some of the cleaning, and other duties. After having run her own household for nearly 40 years, mother struggled with having someone around and she wanted to do her own thing.

Eventually, she let the house boy go and handled the home scene on her own. This was a wonderful change that both she and Daddy welcomed.

There was a community of ex-patriots in Peshawar who invited Mother to join them in some of their activities, but since she wasn't one to play cards, she often got involved in a game of Yatzee and said that she played enough Yatzee during her stay in Pakistan to last a lifetime!

The following excerpt from a letter from Daddy hints of the homesickness that was a part of their 21 months away from family: *No one misses the water till the well runs dry and time here has caused us to reflect on how blessed we have been. A choice family and grandchildren. The comfort and security of a land choice above all other lands. To be members of a church which has a living prophet and worship the true and living God. For these we are most grateful and our circumstances here bring our love for each of you into clear focus. May God bless each of you till we meet again. Love, Dad*

That summer we were approached again about taking an Indian Placement student by Social Services and we agreed. This time she did arrive and in August we made the trip to Pocatello to meet the bus. Although prior to her arrival we had attended some orientation meetings, we were still anxious about how it would all work out. These fears were quickly put to rest as we became acquainted.

Jonie Johnson was a beautiful girl who was open and warm and easily fit into our family. Although she was a Pima Indian, originally from Arizona, both of her parents were dead and she had been adopted by her older sister, Nora. Nora had married a man from Minnesota and so Jonie was living there before she came to live with us.

As one can imagine, introducing a completely new person into the family circle changed the dynamics and everyone had to adjust. Jonie was nine and in the third grade when she arrived. She got along well in school and though some of her writing skills needed work, she was a good student and never caused problems.

In our family circle she gravitated towards Steve and David and enjoyed the younger boys, too. Her most difficult times were Sundays and holidays when she got homesick for her own family. She especially struggled over the Christmas vacation and sometimes when we would have extended family over, she would withdraw into her room.

She was very willing to join in the work as well as the play and she tried to be obedient to what we ask of her. At times, when problems arose, we would have a family council and try to be fair and equitable in solving them. When we did have struggles, I would remind myself that this experience was teaching us all important lessons.

[September 3, 1980: Dad] *Well, it's that time again so here goes. Thanks for the lift and encouragement I received from your letters last month. It always helps me be more cognizant of and grateful for the blessings that have been bestowed upon my family. Let me share with you some lines penned by Emmett Fox that were on a plaque in the LDS Social Services office in Pocatello:*

"There is no difficulty that enough love will not conquer, No door that enough love will not open, No gulf that enough love will not bridge, No wall that enough love will not throw down, No sin that enough love will not redeem. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the trouble, How hopeless the outlook, How muddled the tangle, How great the

mistake. A sufficient realization of love will dissolve it all."

The essence of love that emanates from between the lines of your letters certainly helps to bridge the gaps of time and distance between us. It helps to open the doors and throw down the walls that may have begun to grow between us. It is such a blessing to be part of a family that shares my testimony of and love for the Savior. One of the greatest satisfactions of this month has been the success we have seen through our Temple Preparation Class. As the gospel begins to take root in people's lives, it transforms their very countenance. The changes in the Barry Christensen family, the Ed Crumley family, and the Ray Olney family are a testimony of the transforming power of the gospel of love.

Last night we participated in a choice event. Our stake had a Grand Ball to celebrate the sesquicentennial. We had a reception line consisting of the stake presidency, our Regional Representative and the bishops and their wives. This was followed by a Grand March participated in by everyone present. It was all so much fun! Susan and I were also in the floor show with several other couples demonstrating several different kinds of dances. Before the dance we had a dinner for the Mexicans and even rounded up three lovely girls from San Salvador to come and then to dance with some of the single fellows who came. It was rewarding to see them enjoy themselves at the dance and I think we lowered some of the barriers of some of the nonmembers who participated.

As a family we send our love and add our prayers for your success and happiness.

[September 17, 1980: Dad] *Howdy! It was so good to see part of the Lone Star Larsens for a while a couple weeks ago. I certainly hope they are successful in their importuning. Their visit was probably about the most exciting thing that*

happened last month with the exception of Jonie's arrival.

She is a lovely little girl—so outgoing and friendly. She has definitely won her place in our hearts and in our family. Jonie is doing well in school and is very well received wherever she goes. Everyone says there sure would be a lot more participation in the Placement Program if there were more (participants) like her.

We finished combining Dad's wheat. He had an outstanding crop. I sure felt a lot better to have him finished. We had also cut about 90 acres for Craig Barton and 85 acres for Boyd Christensen. Manuel has been a good, careful operator and has certainly been a boon to me in being able to carry on with my insurance work and put up my hay while grain harvest was underway.

We were just able to get two loads of my wheat combined before we got rained out. During the course of the storms we had last week we also received a little hail. Our loss was probably only about 10%. Thank goodness we had hail insurance. Many others were not so fortunate and suffered a much greater loss. The biggest problem is going to be the sprout damage we now have in everything left.

Our family is doing well in their music, schooling, etc. We are very proud of their accomplishments. We had a good experience as a family participating in a special program for the stake Relief Society leadership meeting on using music in the home. We sang a round (Horsey, Horsey) while in a mock van, all played instruments in a family home evening rhythm band, Sue and I sang a duet of "Edelweiss", and then I sang a solo of the first verse of "Jesus Came to John the Baptist" and everyone joined in on the third verse. There was some script and narration tying it all together. It was a real fine experience preparing and performing together.

May the Lord bless you all in your righteous endeavors and may you always feel the sustaining influence of our families love and prayers as we do yours.

[November 9, 1980: Dad] *First of all I would like to ask your forgiveness for not writing last month. Sometimes my jobs as farmer, insurance agent, Bishop, and father compounded together don't leave much time to be brother and son.*

Weren't you all thrilled with the outcome of the election? Richard Oram said this morning in Bishop's meeting that last Saturday and Sunday the General Authorities united their prayers that good men would be elected that would be able to change the economic direction of our country. Russ Hammond remarked to the Blackfoot News that the outcome restored his faith in our country and in Idahoans. Richard also said many people have told him of going to the polls prepared to vote for Frank Church but being unable to and changing their mind to Steve Symms. I was a poll watcher for part of the day and it was extremely gratifying to see the constant stream of people in a record turnout.

One of the high points in October was our ward's cannery assignment to can beef stew. On that day we had a freak snow storm putting down many inches of the white stuff on trees that still had their leaves and breaking branches and pulling down power lines. We just had our first batch of stew ready to go in the cookers when the power went off. It was off for about three hours. We didn't have any choice but to stay and finish the job we had come for. The

last of us to leave got home at 10:30 p.m. after being at the cannery since 8:00 a.m. that morning. The stew is sure delicious!

For the first time since leaving Ricks, Susan and I were able to go to part of Ricks (College) homecoming. We had made quite a few calls in the weeks previous and had contacted about 15 couples that were at Ricks about the same time as we were. We met for a specially catered dinner at the Manwaring Center, visited, and then joined the Homecoming Dance in progress. My first real date with Susan had been at Homecoming 15 years ago, so this was a particularly significant date for us.

We had a good harvest and it looks like we will be able to just about pay out this year. It has really helped to have the insurance paycheck to live off of. We have received an offer on our farm and home. We will let you know what happens, if and when it does. "But no changes" is not true for us. We love you all!

[December, 1980: Dad] *As Christmas draws nearer I can't help but reminisce and think of family programs and experiences relative to Christmases together. Those memories are probably accentuated by the fact that Christmas was the primary object of family movies. But one of my favorite memories is of having family home evening on Christmas Eve where each of us*

performed in some way and then Dad read the Christmas story to us and Mom had some nice treat for refreshment. Another memory is of going caroling and delivering potatoes to a few special friends of Mom and Dad's.



This has been an extremely difficult month to try to get a letter written. Between work, church, and family responsibilities I haven't had hardly a minute to sit down and write. I have started working out every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at Buff Hansen's Power House. He has a conditioning program outlined for me to start out with different exercises on the weight machine, so much time on the exercise bicycle, and then finishing off in the sauna and hot tub. It has really helped me feel a lot better and I look forward to losing a little excess baggage.

Sunday our sewer stopped working and we had water backing up in the bathrooms, flooding storage rooms, and needless to say, a real mess. After spending all Monday morning working on it and having the septic tank pumped out we thought the problem was solved. Tuesday at about 4:00 Sue called me at work and said it was doing it again. So I worked on it again until about 10:30 that night and think we have the problem solved.

Our ward Christmas cantata was a success and beautifully performed. Sue had a duet with Karen Strickland that was one of the highlights and I had a solo. I think it was one of the prettiest cantatas we have performed. Good music always seems to be such an integral part of Christmas.

We are thrilled to have Gary and Linda and family in our ward. They have such a lovely, well-built home and it is so nice to have them a little closer. They have such a sweet, peaceful spirit about them and though it doesn't seem to be working out so far for them to get a farm, I am sure it will. Our kids are so excited to have them here and already have their seats picked out on the bus and everything.

Our ward had a baptismal excursion on December 16th. It was exciting to be able to take Stephani, Shauntel, and Mindy to the temple. It

was also rewarding for me to be able to baptize them. We ended up having performed about 610 baptisms that night. We had a lovely group of kids and they were well behaved and really seemed to enjoy the experience. My

second counselor said I averaged about eight seconds per baptism and that I should be in the Guinness Book of World Records.



[December 1980: Mom] I was asked to write up a short description of Steve that was used when he was being honored as Bishop. It follows: "Bishop Larsen is a man of many interests and talents. Years ago as a college student he took a test to identify where his interests lie so he could get some idea of what profession to pursue. Much to everyone's surprise, his interests and abilities were so varied that they could not pinpoint one area for him.

He does enjoy reading good books, listening to classical music, playing his trumpet, creating things with woodworking and welding, running a grain combine, and selling a big insurance policy.

He likes the color blue, enjoys a good game of basketball, and orders steak and lobster if he feels extravagant at a fancy restaurant. He enjoys lots of exotic foods and tries all sorts of new concoctions. Although he considers himself a "connoisseur of fine foods" he is always willing to accept any ordinary dish and never complains.

Bishop Larsen is a real gentleman and his polite ways are a blessing to his wife and family. He is seldom moody or out of sorts and is always a peacemaker around the house. He often reads to

the children and enjoys the stories in the "Friend."

He will be 37 years old tomorrow. Just as he excelled as a young scout in years gone by and received his Eagle Scout Award, so his later years have found him trying to do his best as husband and father and servant of the Lord."

1981

- *Steve looks at opening his own agency
- *Sold home to couple from Ogden (May)
- *Moved to home in Rockford (June)
- *Timothy James Larsen is born June 17, 1981
- *Steve starts working for Mutual of New York (June)
- *Timothy blessed and Steve released as Bishop (July 5th)
- *Daddy called as counselor to John Carmack in Idaho, Boise Mission
- *Farm sold to Gary (August)
- *Begin work on home in Northwest Stake (September)
- *Larsen family reunion at Badger Creek (Ricks College camp)
- *Elder Pinnock administers to Barbara at Zone Conference



[January 4, 1981: Dad] *Happy New Year! May it be a joyous and prosperous one for all of us. We had the chance of a life-time this last week, thanks to Mom. We sure missed the Colorado and Texas Larsens as we went to the Nutcracker Ballet in Salt Lake. It was a beautiful and awe-inspiring performance. As a family we had one of the best Christmases we have ever had. Most of the kids got roller skates and have been rolling around the garage, the church, and anywhere they can go. For the first time in many years, we*

had planned and saved for Christmas so that it was virtually all paid for.

The Lord has really blessed us this year. With my insurance income the farm has just about been able to pay its own way. By the way, the sale of our farm is now dead for lack of financing. We have breathed a sigh of relief. We will either farm it ourselves again this year or else lease it out—maybe even to Gary.

Tithing settlement went quite smooth with my new financial clerk. It is still an inspiration to me to observe the sacrifice and faith of members of this ward in meeting their financial obligations in the Lord's kingdom. Isn't it amazing how the Church is growing: the plans call for dedication of two chapels per day in 1981.

We have a new dog. He is a full-blooded Great Dane—a "little" five month old pup. The kids voted on the name of Duke. He is really friendly, smart, and fun to have around. He is almost big enough already to saddle and ride.

One of the highlights of the Christmas season was going Christmas caroling with Mom and Dad, Gary and Linda, Rick and Terry, Karen, and some of the attendant children (and Duke). For the first time we had a daughter old enough to attend the stake New Year's Eve dance. Afterwards we had a breakfast for the kids at Harpers. It was a lot of fun but I am still recuperating from the late night.

On Boxing Day (the day after Christmas in England) we had a real enjoyable repast and get-together at Gary and Linda's. They have such a lovely new home. They can sure be proud of their handiwork. In closing we wanted to express our

thanks again to Mom and Dad for their timely Christmas gifts.

[Mom] Finally, after farming on our own for a year we recognized that we could not support ourselves on a 320 acre farm and that Steve could not keep up the pace of working two full-time jobs. He made the decision to sell the farm and go into the insurance business full-time.

I had a difficult time accepting this decision. I kept holding on to the hope that the next year would be more profitable for farming but Steve insisted that the only way for us to resolve our financial problems was to sell our farm. I still felt that he was wrong but eventually I realized that I must accept his decision and support him in it. He was living worthy of receiving inspiration as the head of our family and I felt that further resistance on my part would only cause a rift in our relationship.

Since our farming operations had been so closely entwined for several years, there were many issues to be resolved with the separation. Both Steve and Allan remembered the same decisions very differently and sometimes I thought we were never going to come to an agreement that we both felt was fair and equitable. I think the one thing that helped us through that difficult time was the love and respect we had for each other. Neither of us wanted this separation to ruin the good relationship we had had over the

years.

I remember a conference talk given by Elder Boyd K. Packer in which he counseled that when we are in situations that cannot be resolved that we need to forgive and forget and move on with our lives. I think the talk was entitled "Leave it alone, John. Leave it alone, Mary." (November '77 Ensign)

For months after our separation I found myself thinking through past decisions and what we had said and done. I realized that it was impossible to remember every conversation; to mentally go over it time and time again was both useless and counterproductive. I finally had to use President Packer's counsel and just put it aside.

As the years have passed and I have thought back on our life on the farm, I have truly come to see how gracious and generous Allan and Barbara were with us and our growing family. Many times we were so harried and busy that we overlooked many of their tender mercies in our behalf. Once the farming operations were separated, I never felt that Allan held a grudge. Our relationship continued sweet and good. Both Allan and Barbara were truly Christ-like individuals and our lives have been forever blessed because of their continuing influence and love for us and our children!

[February 1, 1981: Dad] *Friday I went to Salt Lake City and interviewed for an assistant sales*

manager job. It would start at \$22,000 base pay with overrides on business generated, a company car, and expense account. We have just about eliminated it though, because of the undesirability of moving our family to that valley and the fact that I would be traveling the whole state and



away from home probably two nights a week.

There are a couple of other opportunities in Utah for an agency manager in Ogden or in Provo. But, we feel there are excellent opportunities right here for establishing our own agency where we are known and respected. It would involve a change in companies, but I already have a couple of opportunities there.

We will sell our farm in the next day or so; either to Gary if things would be right with FmHA or else to Kent Judy from Idaho Falls. We are still trying to sell our home so we can build in a little closer to our work and schools.

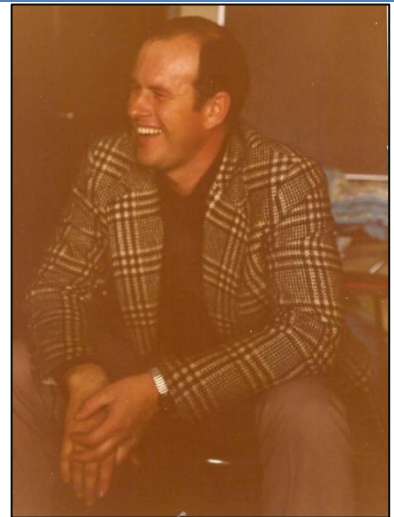
The children are doing well in school. Stephani received all A's but one and it was an A+. Shauntel received all A's but with -'s on two. Joni's report was a marked improvement over first semester as were Stephen and David's. They are all doing well with their music and we are usually gratified when they perform.

We had a ward quartet festival a few weeks ago. The talent was superb. Something like that really opens your eyes as to the talent around. Sue and I were in a quartet with Lee and Norma Griffiths, another one with Mike and Karen Strickland, and then I was in one with Dad, Gary, and Rick. It was really fun! I just wish we could do it more often.

The Pinewood Derby has come and gone again for another year. The twins did a good job on their cars without much input from Dad. Next year is my vacation from starting on John, then

Michael, then Paul, then?

We have really been changing things around in the ward. It is sure exciting to see new people taking hold and the fresh outlook they bring—especially in some of their ideas of who can do what.



Since I don't have anything to write about, I had better close before I run out of room. We sure love each of you and are looking forward to summer reunion time.

[March 1981: Mom to Grandma and Grandpa Richards] We spent some time in Rupert and last week, two days in Ogden and Salt Lake interviewing and looking for possible housing. We are still not sure just what we're doing. Steve has had a real struggle trying to decide just what would be the best course to pursue. I am praying for him to make the right decision. There have been days when the worry of it all gets me down.All the kids have tried hard to share the work load to ease my life. We are gearing up for a girl and I'm looking bigger every week. It's beautiful weather here. The oldest five are picking rock after school today, Becky is fixing supper and the three little boys are watching Scooby-Doo.....I've





been kept busy speaking at firesides; one young special interests, one young adults, and Sunday to a Young Women's group. I'm enjoying teaching Sunday School and my class is growing little by little. It's a real challenge to teach Old Testament.

It looks as if our farm is sold. We got a good price although it will be several weeks before we find out completely where we stand. We are selling our equipment, still collecting crop money and paying off obligations. We want to move in closer, pay our debts, maybe even change jobs. We are taking it a step at a time.....the younger ones are doing great. John is such a fine little boy. Becky, the gifted child, Michael, my absent-minded professor, and Paul, my talkative, bold one. The other day he was playing in the living room and he asked me to put your picture down on a level of the bookshelf where he could see it. He played for a long time there by your pictures, stopping every now and then to see and talk to you. He said, "I need my grandpa and grandpa (ma), mama!" We all do...

[March 5, 1981: Mom] How are all the Larsens, Gentry's, etc.? Seems like too long since we were together. We were in Salt Lake last week and thought we might get to Provo to see Jeanie and Scott, but time and demands prevented it. Steve was investigating a job in Ogden with Farm Bureau and we spent part of the time checking into living, housing, and schooling costs. We are still undecided as yet what course to pursue.

It's beautiful here today. Spring looks like it has come to stay, although I'm afraid it hasn't. We

heard Denver got their share of snow this week. I don't mind snow in December and January, but it's depressing in March and April. The kids are ready to shed coats and get into the swing of things.

They've been participating in talent shows and spelling bees and doing well. Joni won her school room talent contest and participated in the all-school contest last week. She played the piano and looked so lovely in her new dress. We were very proud of her accomplishment.

Stephani took 1st in the 8th grade spelling bee, Shauntel took 1st in the 7th grade spelling bee, Stephen took 6th and David was in the top five of the 5th grade and is competing today to see if he gets to compete at the county spell-off. Stephani and Shauntel will compete in the county spell-off and vie for the trip to Washington, D.C. It's a real challenge and exciting for the kids to have a chance at the prize. Needless to say, we've spent a lot of time spelling lately.

We are all well and healthy. Life keeps us running at a sometimes frantic pace, but in the quiet moments we can't help but feel a joy and satisfaction with all the Lord's blessings to us. The kids are growing older and we look ahead to the addition of another in a few months. We're hoping for a girl, but it really doesn't matter. Time will tell. Our best to each of you. Steve, Sue, and Kids.

P.S. Michael approached me yesterday with this cute comment. "Mama, do you know what I want to be when I grow up?" "No. What, dear?" "A daddy." (Oh that's wonderful I thought. Such a lofty aspiration and showing such insight.) "And do you know what else?" he asked. "No, what, dear?" "A worm." (Well, one out of two isn't too bad.)

[April 1981: Mom] Steve, Serjio, Stephani and Shauntel stayed at Kathy's over Saturday and Sunday. Lisa took the girls shopping Saturday morning and helped them get into a session in the tabernacle in the afternoon. Sunday the girls went to be with Barbara and Karen at the Hotel Utah and watched conference on T.V. They thoroughly enjoyed their time there. I kept the home fires burning and listened to most of the sessions on T.V. I kept wishing that you both could have been here to listen. It is such a time of uplift and joy for the saints. As you probably have already heard, nine new temples were announced, bringing total to 37 world-wide.

[May 1981: Mom] We are excited about our prospective arrival and I'm looking and feeling anxious. Life becomes somewhat of a burden at this point but as I look around and see other people and their problems, I realize that I really don't have a problem at all.....

(Excerpts from a Christmas tape sent to President and Narda Tenney chronicle the previous year's events) We began the process of trying to sell the farm and our home (which) was sitting over on his father's farm. We owned the acre there and our home but the farm was several miles away....we were spending nearly \$400 a month just for gas to drive back and forth for his work and for church living out that far. We were with our back against the wall.



.....because farming looked a little brighter, we had several offers. Simultaneously, with us making this change, Steve's younger brother, Gary, was also in the process of making a change and he was looking for a farm to buy. He had been farming in Firth and was unable to get financing for any of the places he had found and so as it came closer and closer to the time that the

year would begin, it looked as if he wasn't going to get financing to buy a place. He approached us about buying our farm. We had another offer but felt like we'd like to go with him if that was what he needed. We still had our home out there but decided that we would take things a step at a time. This sell enabled us to get out from under the heavy debt that we were carrying. And by June of '80 we were out of farming entirely.

At the same time we were trying to decide this, Steve was becoming increasingly unhappy with Farm Bureau and the type of arrangement he had with them. He felt that if he was going to be selling insurance, he wanted to be selling for a company that he could have some vesting in. He had an offer to go to work for Farm Bureau in Ogden and we really had a tough time deciding

what to do but because our family was so large and because we felt like we needed the wide open spaces, we chose to stay here. We began the process of looking for another insurance company that he could work for.

Also at that time we were expecting a new baby, our ninth. We found that every



facet of our life was in a state of change and needless to say, we spent a lot of time on our knees pleading with the Lord to help us find a way out of our problems. We made the decision to sell the farm and we were able to finalize that and also we had a small miracle happen. We had a couple come to us from Ogden. Their son had bought some property out close to Allan's farm and they wanted to live close to their son and they had money and they wanted to be able to move in immediately. They wanted our home. They were veterans and so he could get the money he needed. They came to us and offered us the full price and we accepted, not knowing where we would live until we could build a new one. Also, not knowing where we were going to be living because Steve was still looking for another job. But, we went ahead and sold them the home and we began looking for a place to stay because they wanted our home within the month.

If you ever want to know how people feel about large families, just try finding a rental unit for a family of 12.

I began that process knowing that we had a baby due in a couple weeks. I began phoning and I got the same answer everywhere. Even the trailer parks wouldn't rent us a space if we could have found a mobile home. I had a little rental place lined up in the ward but a week before we were to move into it, they sold it. I just couldn't believe it happened because I knew the Lord had never let us down and I knew that He recognized that we needed a place. We had a couple in the ward that offered us their single-wide trailer and so finally we decided that we would live in that little single-wide trailer, that we

would pitch some tents outside and that we would live that way until we could build a new home.

Two days before we moved, a member of the stake presidency called me and said that there had been a home vacated in a little community close to Blackfoot and within the same school district....that if we wanted to rent that home, they would be willing to let us until our new home was built. I said, "Yes, we'll take it!" And he said, "Well, you haven't even seen it" and I said, "How many bedrooms does it have?" and he said, "Well, there is a full basement" and I said, "We'll take it!"

We stored almost all our belongings in a grain bin and the kids and I moved almost everything out of our little desert home into that grain bin and I just took what we had to have for a few months. We had several neighbors who helped us move our other furnishings to the Rockford house. We finished up Saturday night, I taught my last Gospel

Doctrine lesson on Sunday, and on Monday my visiting teachers helped me do the final cleaning at the desert house. On Wednesday we had a new baby boy, Timothy James Larsen, born June 17, 1981."



Prior to our move, I had asked Dr. Haddock if he would induce labor on Tuesday because Stephani and Shauntel were scheduled to attend Girl's Camp that next week and I wanted to have the baby and be able to help them get ready for that. He agreed and so I went in early Wednesday morning and had Tim. It seemed like a tougher delivery. I

think I was just so worn out that I didn't have the strength I usually did. But, all went well and we were delighted to get another boy.

Since my folks were in Pakistan and my mother wasn't able to come and help like she had always done, Barbara offered to have me and the baby come stay with her for a couple days until I was stronger. It was a wonderful, peaceful place to be and it helped me recuperate before I went home and faced the demands there.

[July 1981: Mom] *My recovery came slowly, but good friends from Moreland 2nd and compassionate sisters in our new ward brought food and assistance to lighten my burdens. My sister-in-law, Linda, and Barbara combined forces to help me get on my feet. Emotionally and physically I was exhausted and the ensuing weeks were difficult with my emotions close to the surface and tears easily shed.*

Of course, our move necessitated Steve's release as bishop of the Moreland Second Ward. On July 5, 1981 Steve was released as bishop and we gave our new baby a name and blessing. The members of that ward were so good to us and honored us at an event with the following tribute, written by Janiece Bair:

Eight years ago a new family moved into Moreland 2nd Ward. This family—a father, mother, three daughters and twin sons, were not exactly newcomers to the ward. The father's parents were already members of the ward; and the father, himself, had lived in Moreland 2nd ward as a young boy.



Two years later, the father of this family increased the size of his family by approximately 300. He became the bishop of our ward. As the father of our ward, Bishop Larsen has been blessed with an understanding heart. Never incriminating or harsh in judgments, he has a way of making people feel the worth of their own soul. Whatever the

problems may have been, people came away from his office feeling that they had a true friend and one who understood not only their problem, but also their heart.

Another quality greatly appreciated by his ward family is his constancy. He always seems to find the time to be where he is supposed to be—whether it be to talk to a Primary class about honesty, or to go with the priests on a pack trip during the farming season, or to go to a bereaved family in the middle of the night. Whenever he has been needed, he has been there. Parents in Moreland 2nd Ward appreciate his loving concern for the young people in the ward. He has spent endless hours counseling, teaching, friendship, encouraging and challenging the



youth to live in accordance with the gospel plan. When they have been discouraged and unhappy, "positive thinking" has been his key word in helping them on their way back to the fold.

We realize that the added responsibility Bishop Larsen has carried as the father of our ward has been made lighter for him by the loving support of his wife and their children. Susan's ability to cope with much of the family responsibility left to her while the bishop was fulfilling his calling as well as her attitudes and feelings concerning her role as a mother in Zion have been an inspiration to every woman in the ward.

During the eight years that Bishop Larsen and



Susan and their children have lived in Moreland 2nd Ward, they have, each in his or her own way, been an example of righteousness to the ward members. Their willingness to serve with commitment in their callings; to share their talents in the ward choir and recent stake production, and to improve their talents with music lessons; to take an active part in the Indian Placement Program; to set standards of excellence in cub scouting and scholastic endeavors, honor rolls, spelling bees; to promote the missionary work by fellowshiping, teaching, converting, and then continuing to fellowship the Mexican-Spanish people who came into the area; their actions in these specific areas express to us

their strong testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and their willingness to live it.

Bishop and Susan are examples of young parents with proper priorities. Those priorities being their family and the gospel of Jesus Christ. As a ward with many young parents, we appreciate this example.

Now eight years later, this family...a father, mother, three daughters, twin sons, and four other little sons...are moving into another ward. We will miss their direct influence on our lives, but we are grateful for the past eight years of service and direction they have given to us.

Although we only lived in Rockford for about eight months, it was a very special time for the kids. For the first time in a lot of years, they had neighborhood children to play with. They were accustomed to just playing with each other but the subdivision was full of young families and soon our children were enjoying this to the fullest.

In many ways it was a great blessing for me. On the desert the children were indoors a lot and sometimes bored with each other so they were under foot a lot. When they had household chores to do this was ideal but when it was a nice day and they ought to be outside, it was hard to have them indoors. Rockford was a good place for our young family and we came to enjoy the ward as well as our good neighbors.

After moving into the Rockford house, we began looking for a home to buy but soon found that a home big enough for a family of twelve was hard to find. Few homes had enough bedrooms or a roomy enough dining area for a large family. Finally the decision was made to build. We began the process of getting house plans, finding a contractor, and purchasing some land. We liked the area by the new Blackfoot Northwest Stake Center and approached Fred Kotter about buying

a couple of acres from him. He was happy to oblige.

[July 1981: Mom] *I promised myself that I would get you written a nice long informative letter. So much has happened. Our home sold...our farm sold...land bought for our new home, house plans secured. We're living in a rental, change of wards. Steve still Bishop in Moreland Second. Girls at girls camp this week. The family has helped me so much with cleaning and taking care of the kids. The people in both wards have brought so much food that I don't know how we'll ever eat it all. People have been too good to us. My health has been strengthening every day. The baby is beautiful, contented. He looks like all the others did. I think he reminds me of Paul the most. I have been in relatively good spirits. My hospital stay was hard...no rest and finally Barbara took me to her house and she took care of the baby and I slept for 18 hours straight. Needless to say, I felt more like coming home to the brood after that. I think moving Saturday, cleaning Monday and giving birth Wednesday had worn me down more than I realized.*

The rental is adequate. We are in a nice neighborhood. The kids are enjoying their new friends. I don't have a garden and a small lawn so my duties are reduced considerably. I am taking it easy this week.

The baby is Timothy James. Do you like that? Do you remember Timothy in the New Testament? He was a missionary companion to Paul. It is said of him he had been taught by a grandmother Lois and then a mother, Eunice; both women of great faith. Our Timothy also claims that rich heritage of faithful grandmothers. What a priceless legacy.

Received your telegram today. Wept for a while. I'm still a little emotionally tipsy. Oh, how I miss and love you both. But take note that the Lord

has in your absence sent many angels to attend to me. He has seen to my every need. Surely my prayers have been answered and our lives are moving into a better time. All the children are precious beyond words. Be careful and keep writing. Love you more than words can say. Bye for now, Sue

[August 16, 1981: Dad] *We truly feel blessed! We have finally tied down all the details on the sale of farm, home, and equipment. We are living in Rockford in a pretty good situation and have things progressing toward our new home. We are really excited about it and can hardly wait to get in. Yesterday I took Susan in to Blackfoot Appliance for their anniversary sale to buy some of the appliances we will need.*

The kids are so excited about getting back to school they can hardly sleep at night. It has really cost for school clothes



and supplies for this mob, though. Jonie is back and fits in so well. Her sister, Nora, and husband, Steve, brought her the week after the reunion. We had a choice visit with them and sure admire and respect them for what they are doing.

Just as we were leaving for Church today, the phone rang. It was Nora calling because their 17 year old brother had been drinking and swimming and hit his head and drowned. I didn't tell Jonie about it until after Church. She really took it hard. The family will probably try to find a way to get Jonie there for the funeral.

My work has been going very well. It has been gratifying the kind of response and success I have had. This last week I was able to go for a two

day vacation to Diamond D Ranch on Loon Creek on the Middle Fork of the Salmon. It was thrilling to have that kind of association with the top producers of the agency.

Timothy is growing like a weed and is a real source of joy to the whole family. I was just noticing how much food this family consumes at a meal. No wonder they are all growing so much (me included), (Susan excluded).

It was indeed the highlight of the summer to be able to spend a few days with all of you. No uncle could ask for a sweeter bunch of nieces and nephews. Thanks for making the effort to come and thanks, Mom and Dad, for footing the bill and making it possible. Love all of you. Steve, Sue, and Family

[Tenny Christmas tape: Mom] ...we received a telephone call from John Carmack. He had just been called to be the president of the Idaho Boise Mission. He had visited our stake conference a month before and he and his wife sat on the stand. We were sitting right in front with our little family. ...the conference was on missionary work. The Spanish people were there. Ever since we worked with the Spanish people things have gone great guns. In fact, they formed a dependent branch and took it away from our

ward. I've never gone to a member of the stake presidency before and expressed my feelings against what they were doing like I did then. It was hard for me to see them take that little group of Mexicans from our ward. They had been such a boon to us and we loved them, but the stake presidency felt that they were strong enough that they needed their own branch. That's what they did and it was the right thing.

Anyway, they were at conference and President Carmack had seen them. One of our dear converts, Hosea Tearso, gave the closing prayer. Stephen and I were so overcome with the fruits of many of our labors. Afterwards, President Carmack came up and talked to us and we visited for a minute and at that time we both had an impression that President Carmack had a purpose in talking to us. Neither of us expressed this to each other. A few weeks later we received a phone call from him and he asked Steve to serve as his counselor. We could live here in Blackfoot and Steve would travel this end of the state, visiting conferences with General Authorities and with Regional Representatives and pushing the work of the mission forward.

We were both so thrilled because no matter where we lived or which stake we lived in, he



could carry on with that calling. Shortly after that we left for Boise and he was set apart. We visited the mission home, met many of the missionaries. He has traveled except in July when the General Authorities take a little vacation. He has traveled almost every Sunday and he visits as far as Salmon, Driggs, Twin Falls, and holds seminars with the Seventies. He talks in stake conferences and wines and dines in the Saturday night stake conferences with leaders of the stakes and all the General Authorities. He has had opportunity to travel with Loren C. Dunn, Marvin J. Ashton...I couldn't begin to tell you all the ones he has had opportunity to travel with. These last two Sundays he's spent in Rexburg and Bruce Hafen, the president of Ricks College is the Regional Representative for there and he has been able to get acquainted with him. He usually goes on Saturday and spends the afternoon and if it's a long ways away, he spends the night with one of the stake presidency and then he stays for the conferences on Sunday and gets back on Sunday afternoon. Once in a while it gets a little bit hard for me but most of the time it has been such a joy.

Ezra Taft Benson was going to dedicate a building in Boise in September and he told President Carmack, "Let's have an all-mission conference." I was able to go with Steve to that and all the missionaries from all over the Oregon area and Idaho came together in Boise. We had a special session where Ezra Taft and his wife spoke to us. Steve and I have had opportunity to bear testimony countless times....we've spoken at firesides and talked about the Mexicans and talked about everything we've ever done in the missionary program.

Two weeks ago they had a mission conference in Pocatello. We had testimony meeting, scripture chases, programs, beautiful dinners that they served us. We've received gifts from members of stakes and gotten acquainted with so many super

people. The missionaries are so much a part of our lives. They send us wedding announcements and drop in on the holidays after they have been released.....It's been the chance of a lifetime for us.

I don't go with Steve on Sundays. I stay home and get the children to Church but on Saturday night, if the conference is close, I go with him. We have a dinner with the stake presidency and their wives. I've sat next to Russell M. Ballard and visited with him prior to conference and felt so fortunate to be rubbing shoulders with some of the greats of this dispensation.

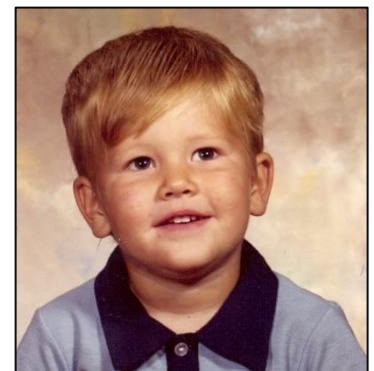
In August of '81 we hired Steve Yancey, a fairly young builder whose bid was considerably less than others we received.

My brother, Nate, who was a builder in the Tri-Cities area of Washington, told us that usually a young guy just getting started in the business will be willing to work for less and that the only thing we needed to do was to stipulate the quality of materials in the bid.



Work on our home began in September of '81. It was an exciting time for us! The kids and I would often drive over to the building site and monitor the progress as the weeks went by. We lived in Rockford for the eight months until our home was finished.

At this same time, my brother, Nate, was trying to get his cabinet business up and going and he asked if we



would consider letting him build all the cabinets in our new home. We talked this through with Steve Yancey and he agreed. Steve (Larsen) carefully did all the measuring and phoned the cabinet measurements to Nate.

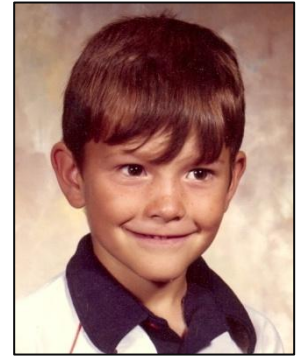
[September, 1981: Dad] *The kids are all back in school and excited and involved. Stephani is on the drill team and marched in the parade at the fair this year. Shauntel is on the volleyball team and they are doing well; even beat Eagle Rock Jr. High, the toughest team they expect to meet this year. Jonie, Stephen, and David are at the middle school and for the first time Stephen has a teacher patient enough to help him by answering his questions; he is bringing home papers that are all "A" grades. Becky and John are able to bus hop and get to Riverside and Moreland schools instead of going to Rockford.*

My work has been going very well. It is exciting and challenging to learn and grow with all there is to know about the insurance field. It is gratifying to be able to counsel with and help people in meeting their financial goals. I am renting office space from Cook Real Estate and have been pleased with the favorable response I have had from people. The way things are going, I hope to qualify for an expense paid trip to Houston for a one week school to qualify for my securities license. Sure hope I can make it there and be able to see the Texas clan.

I just received a new church job. President Carmack of the Idaho Mission has called me to be his second counselor. We are really honored, pleased, and excited!

We should get started next week on our new home. It is a little difficult getting financing in these times and especially with having just barely changed jobs. But we are excited about our plan and our location.

Sue has enjoyed just having the three little boys at home. Timothy is such a peaceful, contented baby and it is a thrill to see him grow. Paul is a real chatterbox. He will be three next week and is a real go-er. Michael is our absent-minded professor who loves bugs and animals.



I had better sign off and get this to Mom. No early bird award for me this month. We love you all and thrill with your successes and achievements and pray for you when things aren't quite so rosy. Love, Steve and family

[November, 1981: Dad] *At this Thanksgiving season we have so much to be thankful for. This was brought home particularly forceful with a letter we received from Sue's parents in Pakistan. Her Mom talked about what life is like for the typical Pakistani. They make about \$35 per month but the things they need to buy cost nearly as much as they do here. Only about 12-13% of the boys are able to get any schooling and a much lesser percentage of the girls. The children follow the cows around to salvage any manure and any little sticks and debris they can find to save for fuel during the winter month. Three out of 10 children don't survive to their eighth birthday. How truly blessed are we!*

My new church calling has been particularly rewarding. It has been such a joy to rub shoulders with General Authorities, Regional Representatives, and choice leaders and members from other states in eastern Idaho each weekend. It has really broadened my perspective to have this experience. President Carmack is truly a great mission president and it is a thrill to serve with him.

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, our area administrator was touring the mission last week. It was a thrill to be closely associated with him through two days of meetings in Pocatello and Idaho Falls. What a spiritual giant! The climax was to be able to participate with Dad and Elder Pinnock in administering to Mom last Wednesday night. What a beautiful blessing he gave her. I will let Mom tell you about what he said.

Another special experience was for Susan and me to be able to go out to dinner with Elder and Sister Pinnock and President and Sister Carmack. And just prior to that was a very unusual experience with the power of the adversary in

attempting to possess one of the missionaries and its immediate departure when Elder Pinnock entered the room.

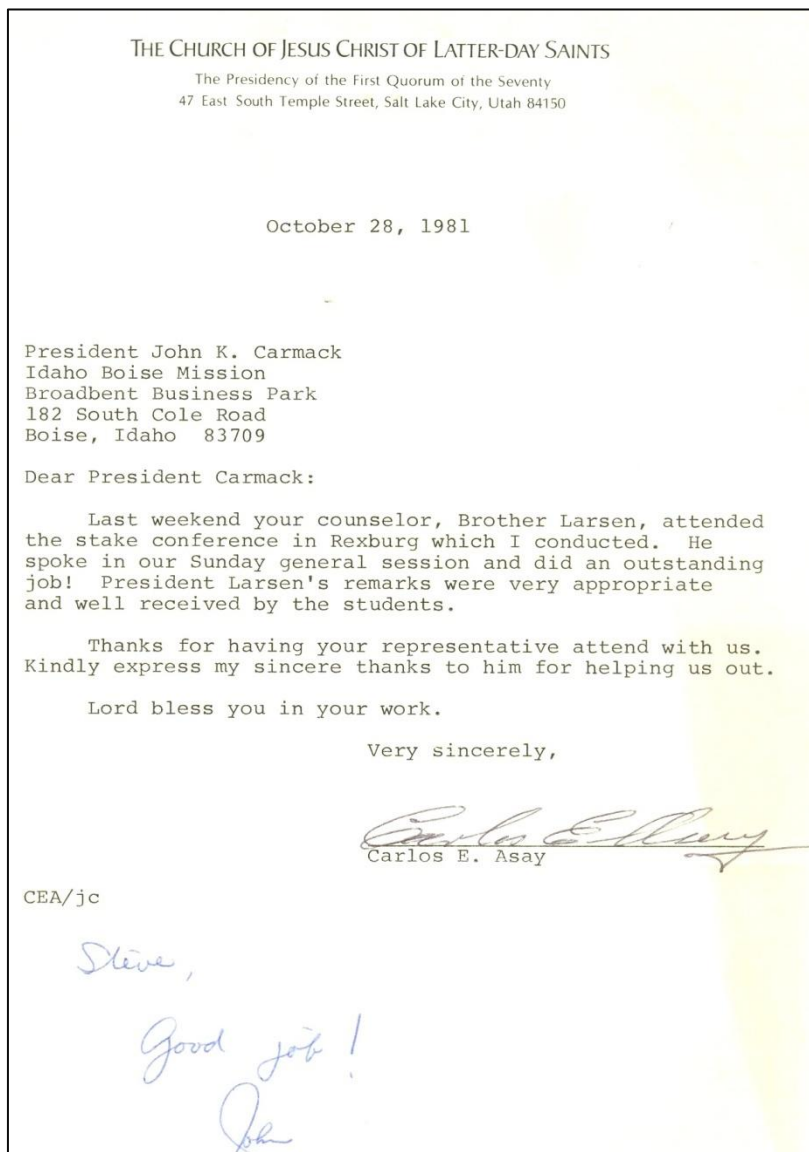
Work is progressing quite rapidly on our home. It is all "rocked" and ready for plasterers and perfa-taping. The outside is virtually completed though unpainted. Steve Yancey has been so easy to work with and cooperative on any changes and additions. We are certainly excited about getting in and settled. (That is accentuated every time I have to wait in line to use the bathroom.)

The children did very well in school with their grades this semester. Jonie and the twins are doing much better. Stephani and Shaunnie

received all A's and A+'s. The past couple of weeks we have been heavily involved in science projects for Stephen and David. They both received blue ribbons at the science fair this week.

May you all have a glorious Thanksgiving with the realization of the abundant life we enjoy here in America and with the gospel as a focal point in our lives and with the choice family we are a part of and with the lovely families we have each been blessed with. Love,
Steve, Sue and Family

[December, 1981: Dad] Christmas is just around the corner and I haven't even written my family letter yet. The message from "Mr. Kreuger's Christmas" was that Christmas is a time to say, "I love you!" Family is a part of every Christmas. The memories and experiences snowball and melt into each other. This Christmas lives and takes on deeper meanings because of the memories it evokes of





Christmases past.

Thank you for being what you are. It was a thrill to feel the strength and power of our family as we joined our faith, fast and prayers in Mom's behalf and Staff's.

We should be more

willing to draw upon that power and openly share with each other when such times of extremity call for the powers of heaven.

Our cup runneth over. We feel so blessed. When it comes to feeding and clothing this mob, I would be the first to admit I couldn't do it alone. When it comes to kissing them all good night, of having family discussions, or watching them share their talents then I resolve to do everything in my power to assure that we will be together forever.

Things are starting to pick up in my casualty business and still going quite well in the life business. The key to either one is just like farming—good, hard, honest work. The rewards are great for anyone willing to pay the price. Nothing comes to he who waits.

My mission work has been so rewarding. The leaders I have associated with have been so gracious and kind. With all the talks I am giving though, I always can use new stories and material. So send me any of the good missionary (especially member missionary) stories you run across or experience.

We had such a special time at the folk's last night. The talent displayed and Santa Claus and goodies and childish excitement of expectation all combined with love and

good will made for a very special evening. The icing on the cake was in the form of a picture album. I think Mom just couldn't wait until Christmas (thank goodness). May your Christmases be happy and full. And may your New Year be full of ambitious resolution and peaceful prosperity. Love from all of us to all of you. Stephen, Susan, Etc.

[December, 1981: Mom] *Sorry that too many weeks separate these letters. Our lives have been so hectic with the building of this new home and getting Christmas ready. Each year it gets a little more difficult for me to buy for these older children. I've nearly completed everything though and now to get it all wrapped up.*

Our home is beautiful! We start the finish work and painting this week. The carpet is ordered and Nathan is doing all my cabinets. He will bring them the first week in January. I am excited to see his handiwork. We communicate almost daily on the telephone. It's been fun.

The kids had a recital tonight. We sang in the ward choir for our Christmas program this afternoon and this morning I spoke to 40 Young Women in the Pingree Ward about Christmas. Last night we were at Barbara and Allan's for an evening family night and yesterday afternoon we



sent Sergio on his way to Mexico to his "other" family for Christmas.My biggest problem right now is keeping pace with all that's going on in my family's life. Some days I feel as if I'll drop with exhaustion but most of the time I count my blessing for the full life I enjoy.

As is evidenced by the preceding letters, 1981 was a time of many changes for our family. A new ward, new school for the younger ones, new baby brother, and a new job for Steve, who had just signed to sell with Mutual of New York. Every aspect of our lives seemed to be in upheaval. Somehow in the middle of it all we felt to rejoice that our prayers had been answered, that our goal to make a change was slowly coming to pass, and that the Lord had guided our footsteps.

Although it was difficult to have my parents so far away when so many things were going on in our lives that we would have shared with them, their continuing love and support came across the miles in their sweet letters of concern and encouragement. The following letter was received from Daddy the Christmas following Tim's birth: *I guess it's a father's prerogative to pay honor and give commendation to a lovely daughter who with a choice son-in-law blesses parents with new additions to our grandchildren. This is a most precious Christmas gift for us this season. As a father away from home I take this opportunity to have Steve act in my stead to give you a blessing of health of body and mind, patience to bear the burdens, peace and contentment and a knowledge that your temporal and Heavenly Father love you and will help buoy you up in times of need, and give you courage for the day. Thanks, Steve. Love, Dad.*

1982

*Nate comes to install cabinets

*Moved into new home at 80 N 740 W in February

- *Rick elected as student body president at ISU
- *Steve enjoys assignments in mission presidency
- *Don Cheney has accident/2nd and 3rd degree burns on body (May 8th)
- *Stephen and David ordained deacons
- *Richards' reunion in Richland, Washington
- *Jonie returns in August
- *Michael starts kindergarten
- *John baptized on September 4th
- *Dad gets training in Bryn Maer, Pennsylvania with MONY and visits Washington D.C. and historical sites
- *Lisa marries Don Bricker in Seattle Temple on December 11th

The winter of '81-'82 proved to be one of the worst in a long time. Fortunately, our contractor had done all of the exterior work on our house before the worst of the weather set in. As the house took shape, we tried to keep Nate apprised of when we thought we would be ready for the cabinets. When we could see that we were within a few weeks of needing them installed, we called him and he admitted that he had been suffering with pneumonia and had hardly been able to work. We could see that the only thing holding up the completion of the house was going to be the cabinets and so we continued to call and encourage Nate.

[January 12, 1982: Mom].....*Nate didn't come that week, nor the next. Then Maureen called and said that he had pneumonia and was flat in bed. She didn't know when he could bring the cabinets as the doctor warned him against any exertion. We were so sorry to hear that news, not only for him but because work on our home was at a standstill and we were caught paying double rent, lights, and heat.*

As we talked through the situation with him, we suggested that he bring the cabinets, as they were, to Idaho. Since they were nearly completed and just needed to be primed, stained

and varnished, we thought that if we got them here, we could set up in the garage of our new house and help with that part of the process, hastening their completion.

He agreed to the arrangement and soon they were loaded on his flatbed truck, covered with a tarp, and tied down for the long trip from Washington. Fortunately, just shortly after Nate and his oldest son, Chad, left Richland, they stopped to check their load. To their horror, they discovered that the sharp edges of the cabinets were rubbing against the ropes that tied them to the back of the truck and were almost cut clear through! What a nightmare that would have been for Nate to have had his precious load of oak cabinets tumbling out onto the road,

breaking apart, and all his money and time wasted! After adjusting the load, they continued on without incident.

They arrived late one night in the middle of a huge blizzard. Roads were closed, schools were cancelled and everyone was just waiting out the storm. We felt so fortunate that Nate was able to literally "weather the storm" and get through. The next morning Chad, Nate, and Steve started working on the cabinets. Steve had set up a huge blow heater in the garage so the stain and varnish would dry and they went to work. I knew that Nate wasn't well but he kept pushing and we all kept working to try to get the job done as soon as possible.

One day I dropped in to see how it was coming and I found Nate lying on the floor in the kitchen, hardly able to move or breathe. He was so sick and exhausted that he couldn't work. I knew that with Nate's history of asthma that his lungs were weakened and susceptible to pneumonia and I insisted that he go to the doctor with me. He agreed. When Dr. Haddock listened to his lungs, he basically said, "You need to be in a hospital." Of course, Nate objected, and so I told Dr. Haddock what was going on with the cabinets and Nate being from Richland and the situation we were in. He said to Nate, "You have two choices. You can get in your truck and go home and get the medical help you need there or you can keep working and die here!"

Well, we called our contractor and he agreed to install the cabinets for us since they were almost ready and we loaded Nate's truck up with his tools and sent him on his way. Steve was out of town that day and so Allan came over and helped Chad and I get things loaded. If I remember

Three candidates set to fill Young's post

BLACKFOOT — Three men have been named as candidates to fill the Idaho House of Representatives position currently held by Rep. Darwin Young, R-Moreland, after balloting Saturday night by Bingham County's Republican Central Committee.

From a field of six candidates, the central committee chose Jerry Twiggs, Cornell Thomas and Stephen Larsen as the three candidates to replace Young. Gov. John Evans will make the final selection from among the three.

Young was named by Evans earlier this month to a post on the State Tax Commission. In accepting the job, Young will be forced to leave his Moreland home and take up residency in Boise. That means giving up the House seat he has held for three terms.

Young's departure will also mean a scramble in the House, since he currently holds a key leadership position as the Assistant Majority Leader.

But in Bingham County, the headaches were confined to finding suitable candidates to replace Young. Wayne Harris, the Central Committee chairman, said he's pleased with the outcome.

"I'm very pleased with our choices," he said. "We had six names that were presented. The three that we came up with I feel very good about."

Each of the committeemen from each precinct on the panel voted. Harris said the final tabulation was unusually close.

"Quite frankly, if we'd had one or two votes either way it could have changed quite a bit," he said.

The other three candidates were Craig Goodwin, Howard Christiansen and Richard Lindsay.

Harris said the governor also was pleased with the choices.

"I spoke with the governor last night and gave him the resumes on all the candidates," he said. "He was pleased to get all the names. He's familiar with all of them, at least by reputation."

Twiggs, 48, is a Rockford area farmer. He replaced Young earlier this year during a special session on reapportionment when Young had to leave for a prearranged vacation trip.

Harris, however, said that wasn't necessarily a mark in Twiggs' favor. "I don't

think that necessarily means too much," he said. "Jerry, frankly, is a competent individual in his own right."

Twiggs felt confident that he could do the job. "I think it would be interesting," he said. "I spent some time over there, so I'm somewhat familiar with it. It would be quite a challenge."

Thomas, 45, is a native of the Blackfoot-Snake River area. He owns a chain of diet centers in the Midwest, and holds degrees in education and psychology, including a doctorate. He moved back to the area in 1979, and set up residence in the Thomas area.

"I'm really excited about it," Thomas said. "I haven't been in the political field very much; I was a delegate at one time when I lived in Salt Lake City. I'm just in a position now where I'd like to be of service to the community."

Larsen, 38, comes from a long line of Idaho politicians. His grandfather was the state's lieutenant governor and his father, former Rep. Allen Larsen of Moreland, was Speaker of the House and a Republican gubernatorial candidate in 1978. Larsen is currently employed for Mutual of New York, and is planning to start an independent insurance agency.

"Whoever takes Darwin's place has some really big shoes to fill," he said. "The only way to approach that job would be to jump in with both feet and find out what it's all about. The first session that a green legislator serves is a learning process; you've got to learn the ins and outs, the way the Legislature works."

Larsen says he's had some exposure to those processes through his father, but points out that "legislative expertise isn't an hereditary trait."

Larsen was the Bingham County Coordinator for Rep. George Hansen's 1978 campaign; he has served as a precinct committeeman for six years; has been a delegate to the state convention; and has been actively involved in the Republican Party since his college days. He holds a master's degree in business administration.

All three candidates expressed satisfaction with the selection of the field. "I know that the committee chose three good candidates," said Twiggs. "Whichever one the governor chooses will be qualified."

right, Chad drove that big truck back to Washington although he was only about 12 at the time. We were so grateful that Nate arrived home safely and was able to get on the road to recovery.

In January Steve was contacted by the District 27 Republican Central Committee regarding a vacancy that was being created by the resignation of Darwin Young who had taken a position in Boise. The Committee was to submit three names to Governor John Evans and he would select one as a temporary replacement for Darwin until someone could run for the position in the upcoming election. Steve agreed to have his name submitted. The other two men were Jerry Twiggs and Cornell Thomas. When all was said and done, Jerry Twiggs was selected to fill the vacancy. Steve felt honored that the committee members would think he was qualified for the position.

In February of '82 we moved into our new home. It was a miserably cold day (-20 degrees F) but we were anxious to get the move made. Although our new residence was in the same school district, we were in a different ward and stake and so we went through an adjustment period as if we had moved to an entirely different community.

The members of our new ward, Moreland 5th, were so kind and good to us and did everything they could to make us feel welcome. The Sunday that our membership records were read in, a member of the bishopric, Dennis Leavitt, (after reading the names of everyone) said, "Are there any more?" and everyone in the congregation laughed.

When we left the farm our life changed drastically. It was such a relief to not be carrying the huge debt load and to have our finances no longer tied to Allan's. One morning I was standing at the kitchen sink

and I found myself looking out the window and wondering what the weather was going to be like that day. All at once I realized that it really didn't matter to us what the weather was going to be; not that day or any other day because we didn't have to worry about crops rotting in a wet field, hay needing sunshine to be baled, potatoes needing just the right amount of moisture to be dug, or the threat of wind or hail shelling out our newly ripened wheat. It was a wonderful, liberating feeling! We had watched the sky and worried about the weather for a lot of years and all at once, it really didn't matter anymore!

Another welcomed improvement was that we lived closer to church, school, and Blackfoot. While living on the desert we traveled back and forth in a suburban and later bought a Beauville 12-passenger van that I used to tote us all around in. It was two miles of gravel road and then about another ten to get to Blackfoot. Needless to say, when we went anywhere we could expect to spend a lot of time in the car. Traveling back and forth, sometimes several times a day was not only time-consuming but costly and our move in from the desert cut our expenses to a more manageable amount. It was a welcome change!

We were moving into a new season of life. Our children were getting older; the oldest three girls were teenagers and Steve and David were not far behind. They were becoming more involved in





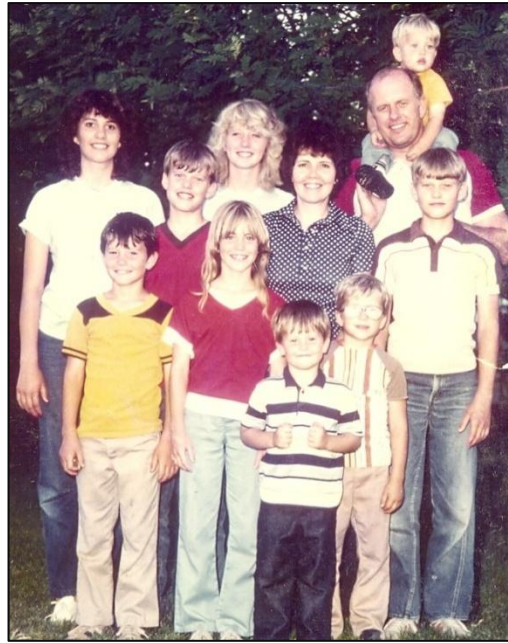
school activities and doing well. It was rewarding to see some fruits from our labors as parents. It was satisfying to see the kids recognized for their accomplishments. But not only were they receiving honors and awards, they were living the gospel and becoming fine young women and men. Yes, we had plenty of challenges, but the children were well directed and ambitious and were willing to work hard toward their goals. We loved following their activities and showing support in their pursuits.

Although Jonie returned her first summer to live with Nora, after that she decided that she would just as soon stay with us. This was fine with us. Although we never formally adopted her, I think for the most part, she felt at home and enjoyed being a part of our family.

One summer we made plans for her to visit her



siblings in the Phoenix area. She took a bus and was gone for about a week. One of the reasons she had gone was that one of her older brothers had been



killed in a knife fight. We felt so sorry for her to lose two of her brothers in a very short time.

Jonie was pretty open about sharing with us her experiences while visiting her family in Arizona and we knew that it was hard on her to be living with our family when many of her family in Arizona didn't have what they needed. Her little sister, Darla, who was only 13 was already involved with some things that she shouldn't

have been and Jonie struggled seeing this and not being able to do anything about it. That visit was the last time she went to see her family until she was older. We were grateful that she didn't want to go because we felt that going was sometimes putting her in harm's way.

[March, 1982: Dad] *We are all so proud of Rick and feel that he is really going to have an impact on ISU. We are certainly proud to call you brother. He that is last shall be first and he that is first shall be last. We are proud of all of you and what you are accomplishing in your own realms of influence.*

We have had our usual outstanding performances in the spelling bees. Shauntel won her grade, Stephen and David took 2nd and 3rd, and John took 3rd place in the second grade. The county spell off for the trip to Washington, D.C. is this Saturday. With all the chances we are getting, we should make that trip one of these years.

For Family Home Evening a couple weeks ago we had a couple of widows and a young single girl living in our ward come over for a special time to get acquainted with our family and we with

them. It has been quite an adjustment to get acquainted in another ward again. Within about a six month period we have been in four wards—Moreland 2nd, Thomas 2nd, Thomas 3rd, and now Moreland 5th. There are quite a few people here that we know and they have all been good to extend themselves to help us to feel at home.



family, he asked, "Are there any more?" and everyone laughed.

A few weeks ago I was in Ashton with Elder Featherstone and then in Shelley with Elder Dean Larsen and Elder Allan F. Larsen. (Shelley sure got their share of Larsens that weekend.) We are looking

forward to a special missionary fireside with Danny White, quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, this week.

We are grateful for the strong scouting program in this ward. The twins have finally been able to finish off the requirements for their tenderfoot badges and are progressing steadily. Last Saturday morning I was able to take them and three other Blazer scouts on a hike in the snow with the scout troop for a five mile hike requirement.

We sure love and appreciate all of you and pray continually for your continued blessings of good health and prosperity. I guess our prayers aren't very effective judging by the level of prosperity some of us are enjoying. Just remember, the harder you work the luckier you'll be.

Stephani was elected president of Honor Society and chosen as the smartest brain in the junior high. She was somewhat dubious about the honor because it is more acceptable to be dumb. She and Shauntel have had quite a struggle with the peer pressure to do poorly and just get by. But I think they have decided not to be peer paralyzed adolescents but to do their best. We are proud of all the kids and their achievements and the reputation they are building in school and in the community. It makes a large family a lot more acceptable when they perform as well as they do.

[April, 1982: Grandpa Richards from Pakistan]
Days and weeks are extending themselves into months and we will soon be winging our way home. We plan on going the rest of the way around the world and stop off at the Orient and Hawaii. But, most of all we are looking forward to being reunited with our family. This short time away has made us conscious of or gained a glimpse of what it will be like being separated for eternity. This we could not bear. I know why

I am still enjoying the challenges of my church calling. It is hard at times because I am gone so much on weekends and don't feel very much a part of the ward. They read in our memberships last Sunday and I wasn't there. When Dennis Leavitt was through reading all the members of the



there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth when they learn because of disobedience the family is no more.

We are anxious to hear that you have moved into your new home. This is always a thrilling time and especially when it represents a monument to your years of hard labor, frugality and cooperation. May it always be a haven of love, peace and rest from the toils and trials of the world. For what it's worth; Ilene and I upon moving into our new home here dedicated it as a refuge from sin, sorrow and the cares of the world; where love and harmony would abound, and we have known peace in our home even though we are away from those we love. Love, Dad

[May, 1982: Dad] *The last two Sunday have really been special—I have been able to spend them with my family and to go to Church with my family and be able to partake of the sacrament. When those little things are missed week after week the appreciation for them grows in logarithmic proportions.*

Saturday morning the older kids were all out in the pasture playing softball. I said to Susan that it looked like the neighborhood had gathered to play ball but they were all ours! We are so enjoying our family and feel so rewarded with their successes and achievements as they grow. It seems like overnight they grow and mature and are involved in more grown-up things.

A couple of weeks ago we were able to go with Stephani and Shauntel to an Honor Society banquet at the Café Cathay. Both of them are on the high honor roll and doing so well scholastically. Stephani was elected as president of the Honor Society and was in charge of the evening. I am glad to see the school more



conscious of recognition for scholastic achievement. It is hard for the kids to want to do well the way they are sometimes made to feel by their peers.

We are surely enjoying our home. We are getting things all cleaned up and organized and it really looks spiffy. Last Saturday the boys and I put up a basketball standard and put up some more of the split cedar fence we are putting around the house.

Work has been going well but we haven't had the cash flow we have needed to take care of finishing details on the home. At least now MONY is going to fund an office for me here in Blackfoot and I won't need to either go to Pocatello for an office or pay for one here myself. They have really been quite good to me and I sure appreciate the differences between MONY and some other companies and the way they treat their representatives.

At the first of the month I was sick with the bug that has been going around. It knocked me down and out for about a week and it lingered beyond that. That experience sure made me appreciate the good health I have enjoyed. I have never



been one to enjoy ill health.

In addition to the stake conferences each week end representing the mission presidency, we have been conducting training seminars for Seventies, stake missionaries, and anyone in the ward or stake organization that has a missionary assignment.

They have been very effective and I hope we will see some real fruits as the members become more conscious of **their missionary responsibilities**.

[July, 1982: Dad] With the frenetic pace we usually keep, it is really only when I sit down to write my family letter that I give much thought to how dear and special each of you really are. There are isolated instances from time to time when circumstances trigger thoughts or conversations about individuals. As often as I am in Pocatello, it isn't at all unusual to be asked about Staff or Rick or Dad, for example.

Last Saturday night we had my 20th year class reunion. It was good to see many friends I hadn't seen for many years. Leonard Hart is a business consultant dealing primarily with computer accounting systems in Mobile, Alabama; Gary Condie is a CPA in Log Angeles and just recently underwent brain surgery and his wife has had 2 open heart surgeries; Robert Yelland is a veterinary specializing in small animals in Hayward, Calif. It was surprising to see how many have ended up in computer related careers considering the stage of development of computers at the time we graduated. We had the most kids of anyone there, but they started a new award for the one with the most grandkids, instead. I did win the prize for the least amount of hair.



Thursday-Saturday of last week I helped take the girls from our ward on their super activity to the Manti Pageant, Lagoon, Promised Valley Playhouse, etc. It was nice to be involved and I was especially proud of my daughters and their conduct. Even Bishop Merrill commented on how careful Stephani and

Shauntel were with their money and complimented us on how well behaved our kids are. Comments like that are always hard to take.

It seems like we have been able to draw a lot closer as a family lately. We have had some real choice experiences together and it is a thrill to have our children growing up. One of the most rewarding experiences was the opportunity to ordain the twins Deacons. They look so handsome and grown up in their suits and passing the sacrament. They are really enjoying their scouting and doing very well.

There are no stake conferences scheduled during July and it has been nice to go to church with my family. It was helped me to feel a part of this ward. We also had the opportunity present the sacrament meeting program and followed the theme: "What can I do to make America great".





We sure had a lot of compliments on how well we did as a family!

We are sure enjoying our home and yard set up. This is such a nice location and it has been so good to be so close to church, schools, etc. We have two calves in the pasture and the best looking garden we have ever had. It takes a lot of work to get landscaping done and grass in, and everything.

I had better sign off and get this to Mom, since I am about the last of the last this month. (Mom's note: Oh, no, you're not--there are still some later--not mentioning any names). Love you all so much and miss not getting together this summer. Love, Steve, Sue, et al

[August, 1982: Dad] *This has sure been a slow,*



uneventful summer! (Tongue in cheek!!) Let me give a little recap of what has been going on since the reunion. First of all, we had a great wood cutting excursion with Gary and Dad and crew. We were able to fill Gary's truck twice plus his trailer and gave each of us a goodly quantity of wood. It was fun working together and camping out together even though it was for just one night. The kids really worked hard and had fun together. Stephani and Mindy stayed home with the littlest ones of each family and that was a real blessing.

The climax of the wood cutting wasn't until this week when Mom had us all over for a home evening of eating pizza and homemade ice cream. That was one of the most fun and casual gatherings I think we have ever had. The kids had a ball. We visited a lot and I didn't feel like it was too much of an emotional drain on Mom.

The kids are all basically ready to get back into school next week. It is hard to believe that our summer is nearly over. The older kids have all been able to earn some pretty good money this summer and be able to meet much of their own cash needs. The girls have done a lot of babysitting and Stephani and Shauntel had a good job rouging seed potatoes for a farmer we all know. Stephen and David have watered and mowed lawns and weeded a garden for their earnings.

It was a real treat to be able to go with Stephani on the Adventurer hike this year. We ended up





hiking about 11 miles cross country in the mountains above Wolverine. It was really hard on some of the girls that weren't in very good shape and weren't wise in their selection of foot wear. One girl was really in a lot of pain Monday night and one of the other priesthood leaders and I administered to her and she did not suffer from those maladies at all for the rest of the hike.

Then I went to scout camp for the balance of the week. It was fun to be there with the twins. We are so proud of their work in scouting. With the merit badges they received at scout camp and the others they worked on individually, they received eight merit badges and their life badges at the court of honor on Sunday. They are well on their way on the Eagle trail.

We have been canning applesauce, beans, raspberries, etc. and it sure seems good to see the shelves in the fruit room being

replenished. We have enjoyed our garden more this year than we ever have before. It is sure fun to partake of your own production, isn't it? Cabbage, cauliflower, peppers for the first time and red potatoes. Our tomatoes have done better than we have ever experienced and our squash is taking over. We are really looking forward to our corn. It looks like we may make quite a record crop there as well. We really feel the blessings of the Lord in the bounteous harvest we are enjoying.

Last Saturday we went up on the Blackfoot River with the Godfrey's and floated down the river on tubes. It was a fitting event to finish off the summer's activities with. We all had turns, down to and including Tim. And we all came home tired, wet, and some of us, sunburned. But it was sure a lot of fun. I had better close before I run out of room. We sure love you all and pray for you each day.

[August 15, 1982: Dad] *One of the special experiences since last letter was being able to work with Mom, Dad, and Rick in moving a shed he had bought to Pocatello and setting it up. Dad kept saying, "What we won't do for #29!" Rick's*

letter of thanks certainly helped buoy me up. Sometimes with all the pressures I feel it is hard for me to keep my attitude and self-image what it should be. I needed to hear what you said, Rick.

Having a six weeks' vacation from my church





job and being able to attend the ward here and be a little more involved has helped me feel more a part of this ward. We had a high priest party at Howard Christiansen's that was real fun—eating and visiting and topped off with homemade ice cream and fresh raspberries.

Our garden has been a real source of satisfaction. The kids are so excited to see the way the squash and pumpkins are taking over. We have had our first squash and cucumbers from our own garden. The peas have done well and the beans are yielding an excellent crop. It feels good to be able to put a few full jars on the shelves and to begin to replenish our supply. We have decided to expand our garden for next year and to plant more varieties of things.

The kids have been blessed with good work opportunities and just this last week Stephani and Shauntel were called to address fliers for Odell's Sleep Center. The twins have been able to water and mow the lawn for an older lady for \$25 per month and pull weeds for another lady. They have sure been good about taking the responsibility without any nagging.

Last week we went to Moses Lake and Richland, Washington for a reunion with Susan's family. It was a lot of fun to float down the Yakima River on inner tubes (the younger ones,



3-6 years old were in a rubber raft). It took almost all of Monday afternoon to do it. The hardest part of the whole reunion was the long drive. On the way over we broke it up by staying in Nampa with Sue's Aunt Ellafair. We drove all the way through on the way home and it took all day. Tim isn't exactly the best traveler in the world. We have definitely decided not to take him to San Diego with us next April.

School starts this Thursday. Where has the summer gone? Jonie is supposed to be here next Tuesday. And I guess John starts piano lessons this year. David has really wanted to play trumpet in the band so we have leased a trumpet for him to see how it works out. Michael starts kindergarten this year. Be glad you don't have to outfit eight for school the way everything costs. Keep the faith and keep writing.



[October, 1982: Dad] This weekend has been a real special experience. I was able to visit the Moore Stake conference with Dad. Sometimes I guess we have a tendency to take people for granted that we are close to. This was a good reminder to me how great our Dad is and how much I love him and Mom.

It is a choice privilege to visit conferences with brethren like Elder Abrea, Elder Kikuchi, etc. I am constantly reminded of the commitment and dedication necessary to truly serve our fellow men. We are

so blessed as a family to have such a rich heritage in the church and to have been taught and tutored in the gospel. I know, by the fruits of your lives of your testimonies and hope we can always help to shore up each other in times of trial and difficulty.

We are grateful that harvest is over and that Dad and Gary have all safely gathered in. With the weather as miserable and wet as it was our prayers were with them all harvest.

One of the thrills of the past little while has been making the last payment on our student loan. We are still almost overwhelmed by the debt load we are carrying but feel like we are making some headway. The message of this round of stake conferences is certainly timely and appropriate. We can certainly bear witness that being generous and honest in tithes and offerings brings down the blessings of heaven!

Another of the highlights of this past month was being able to go back east to a school in Bryn Maur, Pennsylvania. It was an all expense paid trip by MONY—part of which was to prepare to take the NASD exam to become a registered representative and able to sell securities and annuities. Craig Palmer from Pocatello went with me and we left a day early so we could spend some time in Washington, D.C. We were able to go through a session in the temple and to spend a day seeing many of the historic sites. What a thrill and sense of perspective comes from visiting the capitol; Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson monuments, Arlington Cemetery, and so on.

We took the Amtrak to Philadelphia and on to Bryn Maur. After several phone calls, we were able to make connections to be able to go to church in Philadelphia. It was a choice ward and made us feel right at home. During the week's school we were able to do quite a bit of missionary work and make some friends for the Church. We placed the three Books of Mormon

we took with us and came home with several additional referrals.

On Friday as we left, we went downtown Philadelphia and had the privilege of being in Independence Hall in the room the Constitution was signed on the 195th birthday of the signing of the Constitution. How blessed we are to be the recipients of the wisdom and inspiration of those great men involved in the founding of this great nation. I had better sign off. Our thoughts and prayers are with you often even though there may not be much physical evidence thereof. Love, Steve, Sue, et al.

[November 1982: Dad] *The biggest news this past month has been music and report cards. There has been some rather intensive practicing of concertos and duets for the past few weeks. The festival was last Saturday and the kids all did very well. It is really gratifying to see the progress they are making in their music. In addition to the piano, David is maintaining his spot as 1st chair trumpet. Stephani and Shauntel played a duet called, "Andalucia" and it is simply beautiful. We went to a recital Sunday night and I couldn't help but reflect on the improvement in the level of music played there vs. the first similar recital we went to several years ago. It is also amazing to me to see the percentage of those involved that come from the west side of the river.*

We were very pleased with the grade reports that all the kids had. Jonie is sure doing a lot better scholastically. Also, we received a letter from the middle school that both Stephen and Dave were in the top twenty in math in their grades. They both got straight A's, Stephani received a B in P.E. and Shauntel received a B in drill team. Otherwise they were all A's.

Work has been going quite well, but sometimes the cash flow leaves something to be desired.

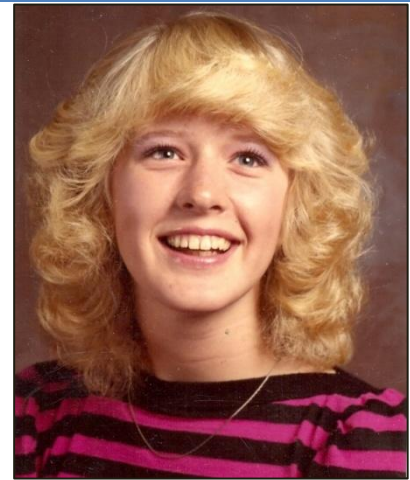
The missionary work is also going very well and is very rewarding and demanding.

We have sure been pleased with our wood burning stove. We are able to heat our whole house with it and thus far the furnace has only clicked on a couple of times when we have let the fire go out. It wasn't drawing very well, however, so last Saturday I turned into a chimney sweep with my own home-conceived tools. It turned out that there was a place about half way down the chimney that soot and creosote had sort of bridged across and just about totally closed over. It was a good thing I followed my impression to do something about it.

There have been several other little experiences lately where our prayers have been specifically answered and we have had feelings about something that turned out to be revelatory. Follow those feelings. We can certainly bear witness that God in his eternal heavens does hear and answer our prayers and is mindful of our specific needs.

[December, 1982: Dad] *The Christmas season certainly intensifies the feelings I have for my family. More than at any other time of the year it seems that we should be together and sharing Christmas goodies and giving happiness and good cheer to each other. We appreciate each of you and the spirit of family and goodness that*

emanates from your letters. May each of your homes be blessed with the Spirit of Christ this Christmas and may you enjoy good health and true happiness in the bosom of your family.



We have experienced a little sickness lately with colds and flu. Tim has been bad enough that sleep has been at a premium and we were about ready to give him away. He is much better now and is growing up so fast. There is a fresh thrill with each child as they begin to talk and become a little more independent.

Work has been going well, but the cash flow has certainly left something to be desired. Everyone is getting excited about Christmas and we put up our tree for home evening last week.

One of the greatest thrills was being able to visit the Blackfoot Northwest Stake Conference last week with Dad. Elder LaVere Ricks, the Regional Representative here had a heart attack and Dad was called on Friday to substitute for Elder Ricks.

He sure does a fine job and I appreciated how he reinforced my messages about missionary work. It sure seemed different to walk across the road for a conference assignment.

I have just made tentative arrangements with Bob Froelich to take over his Bingham County clients. That should really strengthen my base here and provide for quite a bit of future business as I service them.



There was a new stake created in Blackfoot out of the Blackfoot and South Blackfoot Stakes.

Archie Mecham is the new stake president with Cleon Bergesen and Max Collard as counselors.

We have had lots of snow and the roads have been terrible. Stephen and David have enjoyed making elaborate snow forts.

Susan and I enjoyed participating in the ½ mission Christmas conference in Pocatello. We sang a song and did quite well even if I say so myself. It was a lovely affair with the Pocatello Chubbuck stake hosting and serving the meal and live entertainment during it. The testimony meeting was full of the spirit and the talent show was really entertaining. I had better close before I run out of room. "Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!"

[December, 1982 Christmas tape to Tenney's].....*Another convert we had four years ago we took through the temple this last August. He and his new little bride. His mother came up from Chihuahua and spent some time with us. That conference weekend Elder Abrea was here and we took Maria and Armeda, Sergio's sister, to that conference and also to the dinner before it and Sister Abria was here and we had opportunity to visit with her. We didn't get Sergio's mother baptized but he is in Mexico right now for Christmas hoping to do that.*

We have another fellow from Peru, George, and he's in trouble with immigration and we've found a job for him right now but we're not sure what's going to happen with him. We sponsored Sergio to go to Ricks College and he pretty much put himself through but George can't do that. He's extremely intelligent but because he is in trouble with immigration he won't be able to get a student visa.

We have ten children. Stephani is 16 now, 5'9" and blond and thin. She is a straight A student.

She just won the Hugh O'Brien Youth Award and will receive a free trip to Boise this summer to attend a leadership seminar.

Next is our 5'10" daughter, Shauntel. She is as dark as Stephani is light. She is also a straight A student and a student body officer in her junior high and a member of the drill team.

Next we have our Indian daughter, Jonie. She is about 5'4" and beautiful black hair to her waist. She has been with us now for three years. She is very gifted athletically and happy and so much a part of our family. She comes from Arizona, originally, but she has been living with her sister and brother-in-law in Minnesota since her parents were killed in auto accidents about six years ago.

Next we have the twins and they are 12. They are active in scouting and are ready to receive their Star and are also straight A students. They have become a real source of satisfaction although for many years, as you remember, they were the trial of my life.



Then comes Rebecca. She was a baby when we lived there (Sandy, UT) and she is also a straight A student. She has such a quick smile and a ready hand. She has had a lot of teeth pulled lately and she is about to get braces. She looks like a little rabbit with two big front teeth and nothing on the sides. She is ten.

And then there are my four boys who were born since we left Utah. John, who's eight, Michael who's six, Paul who's four, and Timothy who is eighteen months.



Needless to say, our household is like a circus. But as the older ones have gotten older, it has just been so much fun. They are such good help. They do a lot of the cooking and relieve me of that and I am free to come and go and they do all the babysitting. Many a night we have all the oldest three off babysitting and even Rebecca now is starting to go babysitting and so my life has really changed. I am like a liberated woman with children to help. It has been such a source of joy to us.

Sometimes when I think about the hard times we've had financially.....I know we have been honest tithe payers all this time.....I find myself on my knees pleading with the Lord to help us find the resources to help us with everyone's needs, I have to remind myself that sometimes it is a blessing when children are growing up to not have everything you need. Our older children have all been so money-conscious and they have all earned their own money in spud harvest and have pretty much provided for themselves. They are careful, recognizing that we don't have any more than is absolutely necessary. I know that sometimes the very things that trouble me are the things that have helped us with the kids.

....Steve would say that his decision to go with Mutual of New York has been a good one.

We've had some tough times since he made that change and we're struggling but it really looks like in the long run this is going to be the best thing that he has ever done. He is doing very well with it and there is a chance that in April at their yearly convention he might be nominated as Rookie of the Year because he is leading all those who were hired at the same time that he was....He is doing well, he is good at it and he is good with people and they trust him and because of the schooling he had at the "Y" a lot of what he is learning is what he has already been trained in. He qualified for a trip to Pennsylvania to attend a special school there on securities. He attended that for a week and then went to the Washington D.C. Temple....and went to visit all the famous places there in Washington and then when he came back he took his test and passed it with flying colors.

Let me voice the same feelings that Stephen did



at the first of this tape. How pleased we were to receive your letter. You have always been one of the greats. As we look back at our time there in Sandy we have to remember you, President Tenney, because you were such a support to us. Such love and when we were out of work, bringing us your canned chicken and doing all you could to make that experience for us easier. You are deserving of the Lord's



finest blessings. When I think about you I think about what someone once said about you; That you were so willing to do everything that the Lord asked of you. I know that's true and I know that is why you made such an impression on us.

On December 11, 1982 my youngest sister, Lisa, was married in the Seattle Temple to Donald Marc Bricker.

Once we had made it through this time of change, we settled in with every hope that we would be able to have what we needed to care for our growing family. Steve had recently sold some policies that had paid well, so we assumed that in the future we were going to have adequate resources so we had added several upgrades to our new home that added a substantial amount to our monthly mortgage payments. Soon we discovered that with all our other financial demands, our finances were stretched to the limit.

While Steve was working for Farm Bureau there was a book of business that he assumed that gave us some constancy in our monthly income, but once he started working for Mutual of New York his contract changed. He was given two years to build his own clientele and for this period of time he received a base pay each month. Once this time was over, he was on straight commissions. We soon learned that there were many factors that impacted his monthly commission check and some months we were "borrowing from Peter to pay Paul".



One thing that helped us keep expenses down was to utilize the wood burning stove that was located in the family room in the basement. We had purposely positioned the stove so that the heat that radiated from it would be pulled into a furnace vent and circulated throughout the whole house. Each fall we would get wood from various sources, load it into the wood bin in the pasture, and then each Saturday Steve and the boys would load the bin in the furnace room by using a wood shute which enabled the wood to be easily transferred from the outside to the inside of our home. Steve faithfully kept the fire going throughout the winter months with the assistance of the kids. This reduced our heating bills considerably.

Another thing we did to help keep expenses down was to raise a big garden each year. When we lived on the desert we usually had a garden but it wasn't until we moved into our new home that the whole family got involved in the process. We usually would raise red potatoes, peas, corn, beans, cucumbers, squash of every kind, pumpkins, raspberries, and tomatoes. One time we tried peppers, broccoli, and cauliflower, but for the most part we kept things pretty basic. Each year we would can our vegetables, store the squash in the storage room, and get Russet potatoes from Allan or Steve's brother, Gary. This produce, along with canned peaches and jams, went a long way toward defraying our weekly food budget.

In the years immediately following our move money was so tight that many of the foods that most families take for granted were a rare treat in our home. We seldom if ever had any kind of juice, cake mixes, luncheon meats, potato chips, or snacks of any kind. On Sunday we had boxed cereal for breakfast, but the rest of the week we had pancakes, waffles, toast, eggs, and oatmeal mush. The food budget was so tight that I used a lot of ingenuity in my cooking.

One time I came upon a small recipe book entitled, "Zucchini Bingo." It had several pages of ideas of how to combine various meats, pasta, or vegetables with zucchini for a delicious casserole. I thought it was an inspired idea but the kids grew tired of playing "Bingo" and one day the cookbook disappeared. I suspected it was John since he had been teasing me a lot and had tossed it in the kitchen garbage several times. Each time he did this I retrieved it; but I think he must have gotten away with it because one day it disappeared for good.

Shauntel told me that she was talking to a friend at school and she told her friend that she could guess exactly what we would be having that night for supper. Potatoes! When her friend asked her how she could be sure, she said because that was what we had every night! She was right. We had potatoes baked, hashed browned, French fried, mashed, scalloped, or in a salad. That was how we survived!

My father once told me that when he was growing up during the Great Depression his mother served potatoes of some kind with every meal. I always thought that was a bit strange until I was feeding 10 children on a limited budget and then Grandma Richards' menus started to make sense to me. Thank goodness for the wonderful Idaho spud!

Another thing that helped us during those years of financial problems was the goodness of people

in our ward and community. Many times people who had children just older than ours would bring us a bag of clothes that their family had outgrown. They were aware of us and our needs and were so generous. My mother and father's garage sale purchases were also a huge boon to our growing family as were Barbara's frequent donations to our cause.

I think the thing that helped us the most during those struggling years was that the children each did their part to earn their own money for school supplies, clothes, gas, and other necessities. This was such a blessing and enabled the kids to have nice things and not feel the financial pinch as much as they would have if they had been depending on their Dad's income to meet all their needs. Their willingness to find work and be responsible enabled our family to meet our obligations and have what was needed.

1983

*Steve continues service in Idaho, Boise Mission presidency

*Trent Richards' funeral in Richland, Washington (February)

*Barbara battles cancer

*Dedicated our home on February 6th

*Family trip to San Diego/Disneyland for MONY conference (March)

* Karen marries Jim Vanfleet on July 6, 1983

*Paul starts kindergarten

* Larsen Children piano recital (December 18)

In January of 1983 a tragedy in the community involved two families that we had been close to for many years. Doug Page and Don, Kelly, and Darlo Bingham flew on a private Cessna to Portland to transact some business involving the selling of grain. For several years these men marketed wheat for the local farmers and were in the process of putting up more grain bins and securing contracts for the upcoming season. While returning from Portland their plane went

down in the Cascade Mountains and it took several days for the rescue party to reach the crash site. All on board were dead.

This accident left four women widows: Donna Page and Ida, Connie, and Teresa Bingham. This was such a shock to everyone, especially to Ida who lost not only her husband but two of her five sons. Darlo was not involved in the business, but had just gone along for the ride. He was one of Steve's counselors when Steve served as Bishop of the Moreland Second Ward, and he and his wife, Connie, had been some of our dearest friends. Immediately upon hearing the news we made a visit to the family home and spent some time with both Ida and Connie, trying to bring some comfort at this time of loss. We also visited Donna and felt like we could offer comfort there, too.

We made a visit to Teresa Bingham, Kelly's wife, but she was so distraught that she was unable to visit. Connie was left with one little girl, Rebecca, and Teresa had two young boys.

Complicating this sad situation was the fact that in order to expand their business the owners had taken money from the farmer's grain sales and used it to build more grain bins and were planning to repay them when other contracts were sold. When the principals in the business died, all plans for repaying the farmers for their grain ceased. Many farmers in the area were up in arms about losing their grain money and they began putting pressure on the widows to get them paid back what they were owed.

We were involved in this tragedy not only because we were close friends with all the families involved, but because Steve had some of the deceased as insurance clients and so was doing all he could to get the life insurance paid to their widows. It wasn't long before Steve was getting phone calls from angry farmers asking

how much life insurance the widows had so that they could take action to claim some of it.

Of course, that information was privileged and Steve had no intention of telling anyone, let alone those who were planning to go sue the widows for their lost grain money. It was such a difficult time for everyone and especially for Donna and Ida who were innocent victims in a very tough situation.

Because of our closeness to both families Steve and I were asked to sing a special number at Doug Page's funeral and Steve gave the life sketch for Darlo Bingham.

[February 8, 1983: Mom] *We so enjoyed hearing from the cousins and seeing the growth that is taking place. We enjoy so much having Mom and Dad, Gary and Linda, Rick and Terry, and their families close. Gary and Linda and their children are so close to the age of ours that our lives are closely paralleling in activities and we are relishing having our "little ones" taking on young womanhood and young manhood as I'm sure they are. Children truly are the source of life's greatest joy if they are willing to be obedient and follow the gospel plan.*

We have had this past month a great deal of sorrow in this community. Yesterday John Fuller passed away after a fight with cancer. He suffered terribly and death came as a sweet release from his ordeal. DaNae (his wife) is the third new widow we've had in our ward in January and February. I marvel at the courage I've seen in the loved ones of these men that were taken.

I was thinking of how little my own life has been touched by death of close family. On my Richards' side and on the Larsen side we have had very few deaths and none of the cousins of this latest generation. What a blessing of health and protections we've enjoyed.

My thoughts have also been on Barbara lately as I've watched her carry on and continue with her chemo treatments. I know she is sick for a couple of days after she has her treatment and then she seems to feel fine. Many people ask me how Mom is doing because she seems to be keeping up with everything and she looks wonderful. (Mom's note: That's debatable. I was just about to not type this paragraph, but decided I'd better not assume the role of editor. So I will continue as Sue wrote it.) I have to tell them that she does amazingly well although I'm sure she has many anxious and uncomfortable times that she never tells us about.

Linda and I were visiting the other day and we both agreed that we worry that Mom will try to face this without letting us as a family share the burden with her. Goodness knows she has carried all of us and our burdens through every tough time. Cancer seems to be so unpredictable, as is all of life, and thank goodness for the priesthood and the gospel. Mom has had some beautiful blessings and I can't help but feel that she is sustained by them and a loving husband.



We celebrated our first anniversary in our new home on February 6th and Monday we had a dedication. The children gave talks relating experiences of the move and building. I spoke of the planning of our home, Mom (Barbara) played "Bless This House" and "A House Becomes A Home" and Steve gave a beautiful dedicatory prayer. Although this past year has been difficult for us financially, we feel that we have been richly blessed and our many prayers have been answered with the things we needed to receive. Time and time again we've felt that small miracles were performed in our behalf.

Steve is doing well with MONY. He seems to inspire confidence and trust in his clients and his business is steadily growing. He also has received high praise for his efforts in his Church calling. Two weeks ago he left here on Saturday afternoon and gave a talk to a conference leadership session, a talk in the seven o'clock conference session, a talk the next day in the general conference session and then conducted two hour and a half sessions of training for seventies from several stakes. He seems to be able to handle all of that plus his job and family and seldom if ever becomes tense and irritable. He is an amazing individual.

Well, I best go and get some lunch for the kids. We love you all. We are looking forward to seeing all who can come to our Larsen reunion this summer. P.S. I forgot to say that Shauntel is being honored tonight at the Elks Lodge as Student of the Month. We are proud of her achievements. Also—thanks to Mark and Rita for the mobile. It is so clever and cute. A real conversation piece.

[Dedicatory prayer] *".....Dedicate our new home to the pursuit of spirituality and excellence. May those who dwell here be blessed with love, peace, and eternal happiness. Windows...let in sunshine and clean air. Doors.....let in friends and loved*

ones bearing messages of peace and happiness. Walls....keep out the elements; wind, rain, sleet, snow and worldly temptations and influences. Roof...keep out elements and be a protection for all who dwell herein. Ceilings...easily

penetrated by prayers and petitions of all who dwell herein. Foundation and Footings...bear up the rest of the building, be firm and true. Electrical, heating and plumbing systems perform their designed function and purpose.....all fitly framed together as a house to be a home to we who live here. House.... that it will be a shelter and refuge from the cares and influences of the world.

..... Bless each one who dwells here that they may always have a feeling of peace when on this property. Soil...fruitful and fertile and bear fruits and vegetables for the sustenance of our family.

..... May truth always be taught here and those who live here strive for excellence in all areas of achievement. When sorrow or distress of any kind enters the life of any of this family that here in this house they will find solace and balm of the Spirit conveying peace and acceptance and requisite strength.

..... May it be a place of joy and laughter, fun and games, rest and repose, food and fulfillment, music and reverence and peace. A place for developing talents, intellects, and testimonies. All who come feel welcome and loved and like part of the family."

It may be of interest to note that our home was being built very close to the time that the Northwest Stake Center was built, just across the street and ¼ mile away. The dedicatory prayer, offered at the dedication on September 28, 1980 by President



Laverne Marcum contained some beautiful passages that are worth mentioning since this building played such a key role in our family's life over the next 30+ years.

.....And now Father.....we are mindful of the members of the Blackfoot Northwest Stake

and the Blackfoot West Stake for their willingness to support and sustain this project, the building of Thy house.....and the sacrifices that many have made that this might be. And so Father, we ask Thee to pour out Thy spirit upon them that they might be blessed with those things that are for their best good and that they might enjoy the necessities of life, and especially, Father, bless them spiritually that they may be strengthened in the testimony of thy gospel, that they may be able to continue to serve and to be strengthened in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

...And also, Father, we have a cultural hall to provide proper place for drama, music and recreational activities that our minds and bodies may be developed and senses sharpened that we may be more worthy servants of thy word and so we dedicate this facility for these purposes.....

[April, 1983: Dad] Last Sunday was the first opportunity I have had to go to Church with my family since the first of the year. It was good to



be home for a week and to help Sue get through a Sunday morning. She is a real brick to do that every week virtually alone.

Since the last letter we have gone on our trip to California. We left Tim home, thank goodness. Gary and Linda had him for the biggest part of the week and we sure appreciate their help. It was a special experience to go as a family for an extended trip like that. I was truly amazed at how little conflict and fighting there was for all the crowded hours spent on the road. It would have been impossible in anything but our van (unless it was bigger.)

We went to Salt Lake City on Friday night and then Kathy and Dick and their family went with us from there. We went as far as Las Vegas on Saturday and then on down to Los Angeles on Sunday. We went to the beach and were duly impressed with the vast expanse of sand and water. I was fascinated with the rhythm and sounds of the surf. Disneyland was probably the highlight of the trip. We could have spent days there. Thank goodness we were there the day we were rather than the day after. A tornado touched down near there and knocked out power to much of Disneyland. The day we were there the weather was beautiful.



The convention in San Diego was very interesting and I came home with some good ideas and information. One of the most interesting talks was one given by Skip Wilkins, a young man in a wheel chair. He told of the obstacles he had had to overcome since a water skiing accident the summer after he

graduated from high school left him a quadriplegic. He has since acquired the use of his hands and arms, married a lovely girl, been involved in the handicapped Olympics, established a going business, and established quite a reputation as a speaker and motivator.



One of the main things he talked about was the strength he drew from his family and their support as well as his faith in God. He has written a book entitled, "The Real Race" in which he compares life to involvement in Olympic events. He said to

compete, don't compare. Life is more important than gold medals. Tough times never last; tough people do. There are many runners in a race; only one will win the gold, but all are winners if they give their best.



It was a real treat for the kids to sleep in motel rooms and eat out (though the food at the company banquets was a little too rich for them to appreciate) and to experience some aspects of life they may never see around

here. The Las Vegas strip was awesome. But all in all, we came home with a greater appreciation for the blessings of the gospel, Happy Valley, and the day to day life we lead here.

[May 3, 1983: Dad] Well, here it is May Day. I just got back from a conference in Boise and have had a little family night, gotten most of the kids down for the count, and thought I might as well get this letter written while it was on my mind.

The last two weeks I haven't had a conference assignment and it really seemed strange to go to regular Church meetings with my family. But it sure is amazing to me how as your family grows they begin to be pulled in so many directions at once. Last Sunday Jonie had to perform a musical number and participate in sacrament meeting programs on the Placement Program in the two Pingree wards.

Last Saturday Susan and I went to Salmon to speak at their stake Eternal Values event regarding temple marriage. It was humbling to be substitutes for the Idaho Falls Temple President, LaVere Harris who had to cancel the week before because of a conflict in schedule.



They sure treated us royally. It was a fine affair.

The Sunday before that Sue and I had to talk to the Chubbuck Stake young women and their parents on the subject of "Be



Your Self". It sure is rewarding to be able to go with my eternal companion on some of these assignments.

Tuesday was our stake road show night. Susan had written and mostly directed our wards' entry and we were all in it from the twins on up. They were on a theme of comic strips and ours was "Dick Tracy." It was really a lot of fun and we had more than twice as

many participants as any other ward. We had a chase scene lighted by a strobe light that was the climax. Our first performance was in Moreland and it wasn't dark enough for that to be effective and one judge really graded us down or we would have taken 1st place.

A few weeks ago we chaperoned a special junior high dance. Jonie and Shaunnie seemed to really enjoy themselves and were not idle very many dances. Last night Stephani was one of only four underclassmen to go to the Senior Ball. I think her Grandmother was about as excited about the date as she was.

The twins camped overnight in a big cave out by Atomic City. They enjoy their scouting and are well along on their Life rank. They were just called as 1st and 2nd counselors in their Deacons quorum presidency. We are sure proud of them.

We have been getting so much rain lately it has been hard to get much gardening done. Also, with all the other things going on it has been pretty hard to find time to make a living. Life is certainly full and rewarding for us and know that each of you find it the same.

[June, 1983: Dad] *We have mixed feelings about school being out—it's good to have the many hands for the work to be done and the kids are really getting to be good help; but when the weather is bad it sure is hard to have everyone under foot.*

Stephani and Shauntel have gotten into a good part time work—painting. A Stucki family here has built up a pretty good business of doing that for the summers and as the older girls graduate from the business they need replacements.

Stephen and David are mowing Sister Bingham's lawn again and had the chance to move lines for three days as substitutes for Kyle Godfrey. I went with them in the morning. They are getting pretty good at handling that job.

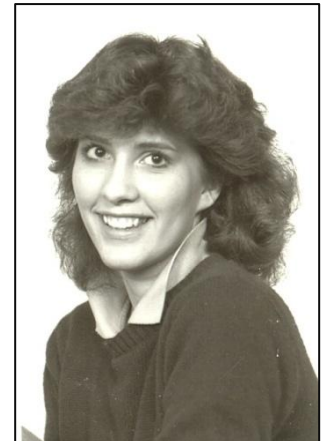
Stephani went to Boise as the Snake River High School delegate (a sophomore is chosen from each participating high school in the state) to the Hugh O'Brien Foundation leadership seminar for three days. She left to go to Ricks for Laurel conference the day after she got home.



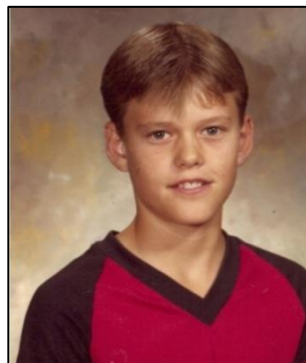
Shauntel was chosen by the Elks as the girl Junior Teenager of the Year. We are thrilled at the honors our kids are winning. She also was given the award as the outstanding choir student and the Thomas award as the outstanding Fine Arts student at the junior high awards assembly.

Stephen and David both came home with near-perfect report cards. This year Becky is the only one playing ball. It is a little relief not to have to go to games every night. John is getting to be a good little worker. He cleaned the garage by himself the other day and I couldn't have done much better. The other little boys are all growing up so fast. Michael is fascinated by bugs and living things and is so patient in watching and observing them.

Paul has such a cute sense of humor and Tim is starting to talk quite eloquently.



In June another tragedy struck our community. The Denis and ZoAnn Murdock children were on their way home from Primary when the driver pulled out in front of a truck by Liberty Produce and the car was hit broadside, killing all three children in the back seat. The driver, their sister, had just completed her driver's education training and had just miscalculated the speed of the truck at the crossing. As one can imagine, this second



tragedy in the same year certainly was a sobering reminder of the frailties of this mortal existence. It was less than two years later that the father of this family died in a private airplane accident, leaving ZoAnn a widow and with another terrible burden to bear.

On July 5, 1983 Steve's sister, Karen, married James Parker VanFleet in the Idaho Falls Temple.

[August, 1983: Dad] *"Deep within your consciousness is the realization that your life has a purpose, a destiny, a meaning which must be discovered. Until this is achieved, you will experience boredom, dissatisfaction, frustration and the feeling of hunger or despair." --Bob Conklin*

It is hard to realize that it is time for this labor of love again. The time is going by so quickly, and with the weather we have had lately, summer is gone and winter is here! I sure hope there is some fall to follow. We haven't had very much happen that is very newsworthy.

Jonie is back again and fitting right in. She told her sister, Nora, that she isn't going to go home next summer because all she does is babysit all summer. She really does miss a lot of excitement around here!

Susan got the bug to fix up some bedrooms and do some changing around. With some curtains given to us, some things bought from Deseret Industries, a little fixing, gluing, and screwing and we have a new look in the bedrooms downstairs. It is amazing how much you can do for next to nothing if you want to.



Work has been going quite well, though the cash flow is somewhat slow. It is still exciting to me to be involved in an industry that is so dynamic and challenging. I am constantly being pushed to learn more and more to be able to do the kind of work I want to. Now I am getting a taste of another dimension of the industry as I am involved somewhat on a limited basis in management.

The kids are looking forward to harvest. Stephani and Shauntel are working for

Dad, Jonie is working for Max Watt and we are still hoping the twins will end up with a job. We have just about completed our own harvest. Our garden had done a marvelous job this year.

The Church has a new video cassette out on the role of the Savior, the sacrament, and sacrament meeting. I am sure glad to see it~it has seemed like a lot of sacrament meetings sure weren't very spiritually oriented.

Susan and I had the privilege of speaking on husband/wife relations at a special Elder's quorum party in our old Thomas 2nd Ward. It was a real treat to visit with some of those special friends again.

Let me close with a quote from the late Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld: "It is more noble to give yourself completely to one individual than to labor diligently for the salvation of the masses."

[October 9, 1983: Mom] *I thought I would get this written and surprise Mom although I'm certainly not the first to write. Before I get into all our not-so-exciting news, I guess I will venture*

a guess on who it is that is going to have #30 grandchild. After eliminating Kathy and myself from the running and learning by a slip that Mom made that it is not _____ (Mom's note: I didn't write the name—have to keep you in suspense a little longer,) I cleverly reduced it to Terry, Jeanie, Rita, Karen, or Linda (Moms note again: I added all the names. Hope you don't mind the liberties I'm taking with your letter, Susan.) Although I wouldn't put it past anyone of them, I doubt Jeanie would embark on her schooling venture if a baby was on the way. So—Rita, Linda, Terry, Karen. I'll say Terry. Michael told me the other day it was probably Grandma. (Mom's note: I just fainted.) The girls think it is Karen but I'll stick with Terry. Besides a little birdie that dropped in last week mentioned it and said they were quite certain of their sources. Enough of that!

Life has come to a halt as far as piano, school, and even church are concerned these past two weeks. Stephani, Shauntel, Steve, and David are working in the harvest for Grandpa and Jonie has been working for Max Watt. Once the rain finally stopped they got going and they have put in some long days. They seem to enjoy Ignacio and his family more this year than ever before and Joyce and Stacy Dalley are lots of fun, too. We've appreciated Grandpa's willingness to hire them and hope the arrangement has been as profitable for him as it has been for us.

Canning season is drawing to a close and it's nice to know that we've got all that food tucked away for the months ahead.

Steve made us a bike rack that fits nicely at the front of the garage and so our bike mess has finally been remedied. (Mom again: It surely does look nice. Can you imagine 9, or is it 10 bikes in a garage?)

Last Sunday evening after watching conference for most of the day, Gary and Linda called and

came for a visit. We had such a fun evening. The kids enjoy each other so much that having our families together is always a delight. Linda has invited us for Thanksgiving since Mom and Dad are probably going south for the holiday, so it will be fun for us here, too.

Someone asked me the other day how we were getting along. I had to admit that we are enjoying a time of unprecedented happiness. Everyone is well, seems to be enjoying school. Our home is such a source of satisfaction. There's food in the freezer and money to pay our bills. I had better knock on wood. The Lord has blessed us in a multitude of ways, not the least of which is being in a fine family like you are.

[November 15, 1983: Dad] Apparently Gary and I are doing a good job of being the anchormen on this family letter routine. I commend you all for the personal discipline necessary to get your letters written early.

By and large, we have been very pleased with the grade reports each of the kids have brought home for the first term. I can't help but be proud of getting so many "A's" from that many kids.

There was a smattering of "B's" and "C's". The lower grades helped to pinpoint problems that after parent/teacher conferences and parent/child conferences will be able to be dealt with.

We just completed a sales campaign in which I have made a pretty respectable showing for myself. If I can just keep the momentum going we should be able to make some headway with our debts. I thoroughly enjoy my work and take



great pride in the quality of work I do for my clients.

My Church job has been quite demanding also. The zone leaders in Idaho Falls called with a dire emergency a few weeks ago. Transfers had just taken place a couple of days before and one of the new Elders in their zone was ready to head for home because he couldn't stand his new companion and his work habits and not living mission rules. President Carmack was not available so it fell my lot to try to resolve the conflicts. It was an interesting challenge to say the least but they have worked together for a month now in relative harmony.

We just had a round of regional missionary



conferences in Pocatello, Idaho Falls and Rexburg. They were very well received and hopefully will stimulate greater member missionary activity. It was my responsibility to conduct a workshop for all the Regional

Representatives, Stake Presidents and high councilors assigned to the stake missions. That was certainly a humbling and awesome responsibility.

Another experience bears recording here. After Salmon's stake conference, it was my privilege to drive Elder Yoshikiko Kikuchi to the Idaho Falls Airport. What a delightful experience! He is such a kind, thoughtful, spiritual man and yet is so dynamic and powerful that he reminds me a great deal of President Kimball.

Becky must be on Miken's wave length. She just found out she has won the sixth grade essay contest. She has to read it over the air on KBLI. It will be in the paper and she has won several

prizes as well as the recognition. She is really quite the gal!

My thrice weekly basketball playing from 6-7:00 a.m. at the stake center has been fun. The only problem is I still haven't lost any weight and 20-30 lbs. certainly would not be missed. One last tidbit—my Omega has started over. The odometer is now on 40 miles.

[December, 1983: Dad] *Our wish for each of you is a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year. We are beginning to feel the excitement of Christmas around here. We have about finished our shopping and so have the kids. We put up our tree this week and also some lights around our front door and along the eaves. The tree is beautiful—in fact Mom thought it was artificial when she first saw it.*

Thanksgiving at Gary and Linda's was an epicurean delight. Linda's turkey was the most delicious turkey I have ever eaten! It was so fun to play a little basketball together with our boys and to spend the afternoon visiting, napping, and watching football games. It is a thrill for me to see how well our families mesh together with so little contention and problems. Thanks again Gary and Linda for a most delightful day.

We were glad to see Mom and Dad spend some



time in Arizona. Mom was so excited before they left. I don't think anything could have prevented them from going. We were glad to hear of Staff rejoining his family and were especially delighted for Jeanie and Scott being able to finally build a home. That is one thing about family—we share in each other's joys and sorrows. Joy shared is double joy and sorrow shared is half sorrow.

The kids were all involved in concerto and duet recitals this last week. It is rewarding to see how well they are doing in developing their talents. Susan and I also had the opportunity to sing at a ward party and a wedding reception that same week.

This last week we had so much snow that our Church meetings were cancelled. Since we were fasting we decided to have our own meeting. Susan gave us her Relief Society lesson she had prepared for that day, Paul gave his talk, we sang some Christmas songs, and then we had a testimony meeting and just went around the room so everyone knew they were going to be involved. It was a very special meeting with sweet testimonies borne and tender feelings stirred. We also missed 3 ½ days of school because of the snow. Now it has been so warm that it is almost all melted. One of the days the kids were out, I took Shauntel and Becky in to my office to help me with some filing and paper work. It was fun to work together and have their help.

Last Friday we had a half-mission conference in Lava with Elder and Sister Pinnock. They sure do a beautiful job of instructing using the scriptures. It is always amazing to me to hear the testimonies of about 86 missionaries and guests and mission presidency, all in about two hours. It was a beautiful experience.

One other thing I was going to mention about our Sunday at home. It was so restful and nice that

at the end of the day, Sue said to me, "It's almost a temptation to go inactive, isn't it?"

1984

- *Steve called to serve on the Blackfoot Northwest Stake High Council
- *Sue called to be Education Counselor in Relief Society (February)
- *Trip to Moscow for Becky's Hoop Shoot/Visit with Charles and Brenda
- *Steve released from Idaho, Boise mission presidency (May)
- *Boise Idaho Temple dedicated/Attended services (May)
- *Stephani attends Girls State (June)
- *Stephani and Shauntel work at Kesler's
- *Jonie stays the summer/works at Bingham Memorial in kitchen
- *Steve is manager for MONY in Idaho Falls office
- *Stephen and David receive Eagle Scout Awards
- *Attend Richards' reunion at Red Fish Lake

In January Steve took his CLU test and passed with flying colors. He had been determined to get this designation and worked towards that end for several years. Not only was he selling insurance but he was also the chairman of the American Cancer Society drive for Bingham County, a position he held for several years.

Following is a letter received following one of Steve's conference visits. These kinds of experiences made Steve's time in the presidency both satisfying and fulfilling. **[January 29, 1984: President M. Gene Hansen, Paul, Idaho Stake Presidency, Second Counselor]** President Larsen, I would like to take this opportunity to express to you our gratitude for the blessing it has been for our family to have you stay with us during this past weekend. It is such a choice experience in our home to have great men stay with us and eat at our table and we want you to know that we

have been blessed because of your staying with us.

Sister Larsen, thank you for sharing your husband with us. I know that if it were not for a good wife and the great support you give him he could not serve as he does. I am sure that you will be blessed in your home because of your sharing President Larsen with us. Your husband brought such a special spirit to our stake conference.

President Larsen, thank you for recognizing the needs of our oldest son, Monte. It was so special of you to give him the tie tack as you were leaving. It touched me when I noticed you giving him some attention. It will be something that he will always remember. It seems that Monte because of his quiet nature, usually goes without notice and I want you to know how much I appreciated your special attention to him.

In February of '84 I was called to serve in the Moreland Fifth Ward Relief Society presidency with Linda Packer as president and Janet Williams as the Homemaking counselor. This was one of the first times I had been in a leadership position since I had mostly been a teacher while Steve was bishop and in the Boise Mission presidency. At the time I was called Stephani was 17, Shauntel, 16; Jonie, 15, the



twins were 13; Becky was 11; John, 9; Michael was 7; Paul, 5; and Tim was 2.

Although I enjoyed this opportunity it was a season of heavy demands on my time and



stretched me to be able to keep up with my responsibilities. The president, Linda, was capable and organized and she lifted much of the burden from me and helped me to be able to be successful despite the load I carried at home.

[February 9, 1984: Dad]

Nothing is happening around here so this is bound to be a short letter! Becky participated in the Elks Hoop Shoot and took first place for the girls her age in Bingham County with 12 out of 25 foul shots. Then she went on to take 2nd in the district at Pocatello the following weekend. So she added two more trophies to the trophy case in my office. The first place winner wasn't able to go to Moscow for the state competition so the Elks paid our way to take Becky. We decided to take John also and really had an enjoyable trip of it. It meant a lot of driving for two days but our worst roads were leaving home on Friday morning until we reached Bliss.

Susan received a new responsibility in the ward a week ago. She was sustained as first counselor in the new ward Relief Society presidency. (I guess that is actually education counselor.) She is really enjoying working with Linda Packer, the new president. Once things are organized the demands shouldn't be too disruptive of home activities and responsibilities. She is also an officer in the Republican Women and enjoying those associations very much. Someday I hope she can have an opportunity to hold a public office, with her abilities and wisdom there is no doubt in my mind the influence for good she could be.

I have also been given an additional responsibility. In anticipation of my impending

release from the mission presidency in four and one half months when President Carmack is released, I have been called to the high council. They have given me quite a light load however, just the stake mission and Seventies, Young Adults, and budgets, finances, and audits.

I have really enjoyed playing basketball this year with the ward and we are doing quite well. Next week we play for the stake championship.

One of the highlights of last month was the family home evening we had at Gary and Linda's. The remodeling they have done has certainly made their home more functional and appealing. It is always a joy to be in their home and with the casual evening we had I think we had some real enjoyable discussions with the family, even though we didn't get much decided, other than that we probably won't be having our family reunion this summer in Los Angeles and going to the Olympics.

Last night our family was a celestial family in a special fireside for the seminary. We had everyone dressed in white, Susan and I talked a little about the Celestial Kingdom and we sang "I Am A Child Of God" as a family with Mom accompanying. The young people had been taken to rooms representing the Telestial and Terrestrial kingdoms first and the contrast with



the Celestial Kingdom was really accentuated.

We continue to be proud of the kids and their achievements with the piano, their grades, and everything else they are doing. The boys are particularly enjoying their Commodore 64 computer. They spend hours programming it and running their programs. We sure feel that it is important that kids have good hands-on experience with computers in this day and age.

Stephani and Shauntel both had dates to the Junior Prom. That was a rather traumatic night for Susan to have her daughters leave all dressed up so beautiful and realize how quickly time flies. The girls are really getting to enjoy my call, with the missionaries dropping in for various reasons. And most of their friends are really envious of the experiences they are having.



I have had the opportunity of two conference visits with Dad the last few weeks. What a joy that has been! We went to the Paul stake conference together and had some good visiting time as we traveled. We will sure be glad to see winter draw to a close. We have had it with the snow and the cold and the icy roads. Besides that we are about to the end of our wood pile.

[March, 1984: Dad] *I can't believe that another month has come and gone already and here it is family letter time again. When you think of it, it is somewhat of a miracle that we have been able to keep this tradition alive for as long as we have.*

One of the most exciting bits of news on our part is that Stephani has been selected as one of the representatives from Snake River to attend Girl's State. Since Susan had such a choice experience there and served as Governor the next year then she is particularly excited for Stephani to have this experience.

We have been busy with the usual schedule of piano lessons, stake conference visits, work and so on. Added to that has been my new stake responsibilities, Susan's new responsibilities in the Relief Society, long talks with the girls about their love life, basketball, Driver's Ed for Jonie, American Cancer Society crusade, Eagle projects, merit badges, and a few other miscellaneous and sundry items that don't need to be itemized. So life continues at its normal pace.

One landmark event has made it all a little easier, and that is Tim has decided it is time for him to start going potty. It's about time I guess, but it has just happened overnight.

It is sure nice to have the weather a little more moderate. Most of the roads are clear now. We have a big pond in our front yard and across part of our driveway that will take a while to dry up. But I even had the temerity to wash my car last Saturday.



Susan and I are leaving for a few days. We are going to Boise for the MONY annual meeting. We are excited about getting away together for a few days but sure wonder if it is worth it after all that it takes to plan and coordinate schedules for this family to enable us to leave for just two days.

The news about Staff and Kathy is really exciting. We are all looking forward to having them around. We sure hope and pray that everything works out as planned. We sure do love each of you and are so thrilled with all you and your families are doing.

At the Ricks College Stake Conference yesterday Bruce Hafen, the Regional Representative quoted Richard L. Evans, "Those who will only live with perfect people will soon be all alone." I just want to live with my family, regardless of their state of perfection.

[April, 1984: Dad] *Family letter time rolls around so fast. This school year is almost over already. It doesn't seem possible that next year Stephani will be a senior and Tim will be the only one left at home. It was rather overwhelming to register five for Seminary next year. And with*

Becky's birthday this week, we will have six kids in Mutual. No wonder what hair I have left is turning gray!

Stephani was elected as one of the vice presidents of the student body for next year and gets to go to a training seminar in Moscow next week. This weekend the Chamber Singers are going on a small tour ending up in Salt Lake City and she is really looking forward to those experiences. She



and Shauntel played solos at music festival and received perfect scores and accolades from the judge. We are proud of all the kids and their achievements in music and their studies.

It was a real thrill to meet at the folk's for home evening last week and enjoy a family recital and special treats from Mom in the spirit of Easter. It is an awesome sight to see all those bodies in the living room and to realize that there were still four other families who weren't represented there. How we wish there was some way for you to be able to share those experiences with us. Let me assure you however, that our thoughts and prayers are often centered on you and we look forward to family reunion time to be able to get caught up with your families.

The weather has finally warmed up so the snow is all melted and we have been doing some yard and garden work. It is a real thrill to till the soil and be able to work with it in producing a good garden and many of the food needs of our family. Our first garden spot has such beautiful soil. We plowed up some more pasture last fall and when we get it worked up and planted we will have a humongous garden.

Last Saturday when I was working in the back yard, Mom stopped by. I looked up and saw her as she came around the garage and she looked so vibrant and happy! I thought how truly blessed she and we are to have her still around to lighten our burdens and to spread happiness and joy with her thoughtful actions and words! We are truly blessed to belong to a Church that helps us realize the importance of our families and encourages us to



forge strong ties linking generation to generation. What price can be placed upon the powerful influence and example of good grandparents in helping to raise a family!

[May, 1984: Dad] Time sure flies when you're having fun or getting older! Right, Mark. Happy Birthday!

It looks like this month will finish off my mission assignment.

President Carmack, because of his new calling, will be released a month early and his counselors along with him. It has been a real thrill to be so closely associated with someone that is now serving with the Brethren (with a big "B" to contrast with the rest of us little "b" brethren). He truly is a great man and I feel like I have truly learned a lot from him. As mentors I look to Dad and President Carmack as teaching me anything I know about Church government and administration.

The Boise Temple open house has been a very exciting thing in the mission. Before the open house they expected about 75,000 to go through. After the dust settles it looks like about 140,000 will have gone through. It has really opened peoples' eyes and minds as far as the Church is

concerned in Treasure Valley. The public relations has been tremendous and the doors that are being opened to the missionaries are legion. Susan and I are looking forward to going through one of the dedication sessions this weekend. It certainly is a beautiful and functional work-oriented temple.



[Mom] We were invited as special guests to the Boise Temple open house and dedication. It was a rare privilege and the first temple dedication that Steve and I had attended.

Whenever we visited in Boise on mission business, the Carmack's invited us to stay with them at the mission home. This was certainly a sweet gesture on their part and gave us a peek into the workings of a mission president's life. Sister Carmack was not a step behind her husband as far as efficiency and abilities. She managed her responsibilities with grace and cheerfulness and made us feel right at home.

When Dad was released from the mission presidency it was a time of mixed emotions as one can readily understand, but as a family we were happy to welcome him back into the Sunday family circle and he was soon busily involved in our own ward and stake and coming to appreciate the good people of the Blackfoot Northwest Stake.

[Dad, continued] We are thrilled to finally be getting some decent weather and to be able to stand to be outside to do yard work and get our garden in. We have broken out some more pasture for garden this year and hope we can grow something besides weeds there.

Paul had the chicken pox awhile ago and we are hoping the four little boys will get over it all the same time. Stephen and David have finished off all the requirements for their Eagles and are getting ready for Board of Reviews and final details. Jonie is going to be staying for the



summer. We are looking forward to having her be able to share in family reunions, girl's camp, a job, and so on.

Jack Kesler called the other day. He has been so pleased with Stephani and her work and was impressed with Shauntel when she interviewed with him and would like to have her start working in the garden shop as soon as school is out.

That is most of the news in a nutshell. Just a thought in passing. Probably one of the most significant events in the history of the Larsen family will be recorded as when Dad talked Barbara Elswood into marrying him. The influence she has had on her children and her children's children is so far reaching that it will have a ripple effect through eternity.



[June 7, 1984: Mom] Summer has finally arrived although you'd never know it to see the weather. We've had rain the last

four days and the little ones are housebound. No one has really seemed too upset about it though, so we've enjoyed being out of school and having life settle down a little.

A week ago we were up to our ears in "Junior-miss"ing and two weeks ago we were on our way to Boise for Shauntel's pageant. I feel like all I've thought about for the last two months in pageants. Neither Stephani nor Shauntel placed in their competitions, but I think that they both enjoyed their experiences. Stephani did win the Scholastic Award (Mom's note: Allan congratulated Stephani on this by saying she did that through her own effort; not through some

judge's opinion) and took second in the talent competition.

While we were in Boise, we attended the Boise temple dedication and said our final good-byes to the Carmacks. The next president came May 31st and so we are released from the mission assignment. Steve has been serving on the high council for the last four months and now he can give it his full attention. We are both feeling a bit relieved and relaxed to see May come and go.

The challenge ahead looks to be one of keeping up with kids and summer jobs. Stephani and Shauntel and Jonie all have full-time jobs for the summer. Jonie got on at Bingham Memorial Hospital in the kitchen. We located some uniforms and white shoes for her and she looks very official. Shauntel works in Kesler's garden shop and Stephani at the check stand. Hours vary from week to week and so it's a trick getting everyone everywhere on time. We are grateful to have employment though and have already seen the benefits in the children's lives.

We are well and healthy. Enjoying having Staff and Kathy close. They have had us out to their home twice and they are gracious hostesses. We appreciate Mom and Dad and their constant support to us in many ways. They went to Boise to support Shauntel and Dad helped sponsor Stephani in Jr. Miss.



Mom called the other day and asked me if I'd like to sort through some items she had no longer need of. I appreciated her efforts to share with us her bounty and I came home loaded with odds and ends that we are enjoying and putting to good use. Seems like it takes every ounce of ingenuity and careful managing to keep up with temporal and spiritual needs of this family. We have appreciated all the Good Samaritans in our family and ward family who look out for our needs in many ways.

Our family is growing older (Stephani takes her college ACT exams Saturday) and the rewards are so satisfying. I can't think of anything I'd rather spend my time doing for the next 20 years than getting each child raised and off to a good start.

We appreciate being a part of the Larsen Clan and hope that we can enjoy some time together this summer. God bless and keep you—



[July, 1984: Dad] *With President Carmack leaving on June 1st for his responsibilities in the First Quorum of Seventy, it has released me from the mission presidency. The additional time on the weekends has been welcome. We have met the new mission president and talked with him a couple of times. I am sure he will do a fine job and make his own tracks.*

The Pocatello and Blackfoot Zone Leaders have been special friends and have each had me come and speak at a Zone Conference this past month. That has been quite rewarding. It was especially enjoyable to participate with the Blackfoot Zone-- we had a barbecue at Lyle and Donna (Page) Monk's. And then Susan and I were both able to speak with the missionaries.

We have been having a delightful time with our family lately. It seems like they are at such a delightful stage now. Summer is really hectic with everyone going so many different directions but it is rewarding to see everyone so busy.

The twins were especially enthused over their birthday present--a disc drive for their Commodore 64. They just about live at their keyboard. It was fun for me a few days ago to be able to go down the canal with them and Garon. The three boys each have rubber rafts and that really makes floating the canal a lot more fun. Also, it was neat that the three of them passed their Eagle Board of Review on the same day, last Sunday.

The additional responsibility as manager of the Idaho Falls MONY office has finally devolved

upon my shoulders. It means a great deal more work but hopefully it will be worth it. I still am supposed to maintain my personal production and spend about half of my time in management--recruiting, training, etc. I was in Boise for a training seminar at the same time Stephani was at Girls' State. So I dropped in at the Inauguration on Thursday night. The look on her face as she saw me was worth the whole trip.

Sue and I have been popular chaperones lately. We chaperoned a youth dance a couple of weeks ago and then we were responsible for a Young Adult blacktop dance. It is fun to have that tie-in with the youth. Well, I'd better think I am about

out of room. We love and appreciate you all.

In August of '84 Stephani began her senior year. She was serving as a student body officer, serving in her Laurel class leadership, taking piano lessons, and a member of

Chamber Singers. Her life was like a whirlwind but, we were immensely proud of her!

[August, 1984: Dad] *Apparently I am about the last of the last this month. This past month and a half has been something else. With my management responsibilities in Idaho Falls and trying to maintain my own business here in Blackfoot it has stretched me pretty thin. But I guess that is how we grow.*

As a family we have had a pretty good summer. With all the various jobs the older kids have had it has made it possible for them to buy most of their school things and still have some money left in the bank. Though they probably don't realize it,



it has been readily apparent to us the growth and self-confidence they have developed.

Stephen and David are just about through with Driver's Education. It doesn't seem possible that we will have seven licensed drivers in the family.

We totally enjoyed our Richards' family reunion at Redfish Lake. Thanks to Staff we had a trailer available that made camping with our large family so much easier. I also recarpeted our van and cleaned it thoroughly and it almost seemed like new. We had an exciting time floating down the Salmon River just below Stanley. The kids spent quite a bit of time in and on the lake and one of the highlights were the evening firesides and talks. One of the families arranged for a snow cone machine and had it set up with all different flavors and we all ate snow cones until they were coming out of our ears.

The kids are back in school and going strong. Tim is a little lonely and starts looking for his buddy Paul about noon when he came home from kindergarten last year. We certainly get our share of benefit from the local school system considering the amount of taxes we pay for their support.

Brent Orr is the new junior high principal and we are certainly impressed with him. He was in Kathy's family's Stake in Houston and they really sing his praises.

The girls really enjoyed girls' camp--it was Becky and Jonie's first. It was rewarding to be able to go on the Adventurer's hike with Shauntel. She is maturing so much and getting to be so fun to be around. We sang at a campfire program that

night and I had to give a talk, but I think it went quite well. We ended up hiking about 12 miles cross-country and saw some beautiful sights.

May God continue to bless and keep each of you. We certainly thrill to hear of the growth and accomplishments of your families.

[October, 1984: Dad] *Last week was so special with Jeanie here. We missed the patriarch of the Gentry clan but it was a delight to be able to visit with Jeanie and the little ones and let cousins renew associations and catch up a little on what is going on in your lives.*



Since last month's letter we have had the Court of Honor for Steve and Dave. They sure are handsome Eagles! (No prejudice allowed.) We are so proud of the way they conduct themselves and the influence for good that they are on their friends. I wonder what 14 year olds ever did before the age of computers. They sure spend a lot of time with theirs.

Harvest went very smooth from our vantage point. The weather was good enough that the kids worked pretty consistent hours and were able to get through without missing much school. It was a good thing Dad was all set to dig as soon as school was out because the weather has sure been rotten since the day they finished the last couple of loads. There are still quite a few farmers around with spuds left in the ground.

We decided to take all the family out for a special harvest dinner. North's Chuck Wagon in Pocatello ended up being our destination and quite an experience for our family. The kids ate

all they wanted of whatever they wanted until they were all stuffed.

Work has been going well. My office in Idaho Falls is very comfortable and nice. It is handy to have more direct access to a secretary. I just have to learn how to use her more to help me accomplish what I need to do. It is going to be hard on me to have to close down my Blackfoot office but MONY doesn't think it is right to pay rent for me in two offices.

The last few weeks I have spent a fair amount of time car shopping. My Omega has gone 124,000 miles and is developing some undecipherable noises and problems. It is sure hard to buy a car when you want a \$12,000 car and can't afford to even spend \$6,000 for it!

It seems like talk assignments keep rolling in. What with high council speaking assignments and other invitations, we keep busy. Sue has a talk on discipline to give to the West Stake Primary workers that she has been working on for weeks. I just had a Young Adult leadership training seminar last night in an attempt to get the wards to do more than just rely on the regional firesides and activities to meet the needs of the singles.

[November, 1984: Mom]*As many of you may find yourself doing on your birthday, I have spent some time thinking about being 39. I've almost been married as long as I've been single. Stephani reminded me I'm half way through my expected life span of 80. Paul told me that I was*

going to soon be a grandma because of the veins on the back of my hands, etc, etc. Anyway, aside from these astute observations and reflections, it has occurred to me today that truly life does pass quickly by and here I am just a few months away from having this nest start to empty.

How is it possible, I've mused, that each day has its equal share of minutes and yet when the days and months are added together they seem to defy time and slip too quickly into yesterday. But, how good it feels to come this far and find myself surrounded by the people I love and by those who love me, too.



Section IV: Family Memories

WORK EXPERIENCES

Because I was raised in a home where work was enthroned, it was important to me that my own children learn to be industrious. From the time they were very small, they helped with household duties and were encouraged to be productive. During the summer months we had job charts and the morning hours were for working around the house, yard, and garden. This included babysitting their younger brothers and sisters, weeding the garden, cooking meals, doing dishes, being responsible for their own bedrooms, and even included their daily piano practicing time.

Because we farmed during the early years, many of the older children's work experiences were farm-related. Stephani and Shauntel rolled hay bales that had been rained on and needed to dry out underneath. While doing this they often disturbed nests of baby mice and watched them scamper to safety. They also did a little of the "picking rock" that is the bane of anyone who has farmed the desert. Each spring the frost from the previous winter broke up the lava and then these rocks migrated to the top of the soil and needed to be picked so that they didn't create problems with the farm equipment.

Also, when Stephani and Shauntel were teenagers, Allan hired them to rogue his fields of potatoes. They walked through the field, row by row, looking for diseased plants. If they found one, they dug it up so that the fields would be disease-free. Allan sold his potatoes as certified seed to regional potato growers and so it was

imperative that they were clean so that they would pass inspection.

[May, 1980: Mom's Journal] *Steve and David will be helping their dad move lines this summer and all the kids (oldest 6) have been picking rock and cleaning up the farm. Last week our whole family spent part of a day sprucing up the labor house and burning old garbage. We raked away layer after layer of rubbish—like uncovering some ancient civilization, year by year. Needless to say, the whole place took on a spiffy look. We were proud of ourselves. It's great to have ready employment for the kids and fun to work side by side.*



When Steve and David moved pipe they worked as a team, one on each end of the pipe section since they were too small to handle a section alone. Their feelings about this were summarized by Steve: *We'd always pray we'd break our arm or leg so we wouldn't have to go. One night I prayed that I would never make any more mistakes if I could get out of moving pipe. The next morning, day broke, and low and behold, Dad hadn't waked us up. My prayer was answered! Come to find out, Dad had come down to get us but our door was locked, so he had moved our line himself that day.*

The kids always had plenty of opportunities to babysit but it paid so poorly that it was one of their least favorite jobs. Stephani got a job cleaning for a neighbor family and that helped bring in a little cash each week and sometimes she and Shauntel hired out to wash windows or do other household tasks. It was a big relief

when they got old enough to work at Kesler's Market.

Each spring, as a family, we prayed for summer employment opportunities. Since I had worked at Kesler's Market as a newlywed, I was friends with the Kesler family and we had an "in" there. Before approaching Jack Kesler, we went to Job Service in Blackfoot and investigated all the employment possibilities. A counselor there, after looking over our family's financial statement, informed us that we qualified for a program that would pay the first \$200 in wages. We approached Jack with this proposition and he hired Stephani. She proved to be such a capable and cheerful employee that Jack not only hired her but also Shauntel, Jonie, John, Michael, Paul, and SaraKay when they were of age. This was a wonderful working environment for them and proved over the years to be a real God-send.

[Stephani] *"I was very happy to get work at Kesler's. I worked as a cashier, memorizing egg prices, candy prices, produce prices, pop prices, and the ad prices each week. That was a good job, even though I remember being so tired during my hour lunch break that I would walk over to Taco Bell and fall asleep on one of their back tables."*

[Shauntel] *"My most memorable job was working in Kesler's Garden Center. I think I worked there for two springs/summers before being "promoted" to cashier. I don't have many specific memories, just enjoyed arriving early in the morning and unloading flats of petunias and vegetables from the delivery truck, watering the plants before the customers arrived, and staying after closing time at dusk to water again."*

Jonie was as good a worker as the other children. When she was old enough to get a harvest job, she checked around the area and soon had lined one up with a neighboring farmer, Max Watt. Later she worked for Allan in harvest with the

other siblings. When she was old enough she worked in the kitchen at Bingham Memorial Hospital for one summer and as a file clerk at the Blackfoot Job Service. Later she worked at Kesler's until she graduated from high school and started attending Mary Kawakami's Beauty School in Provo, Utah. She was always willing to lend a hand and especially enjoyed cooking desserts at home. (Red cinnamon suckers were her specialty!)

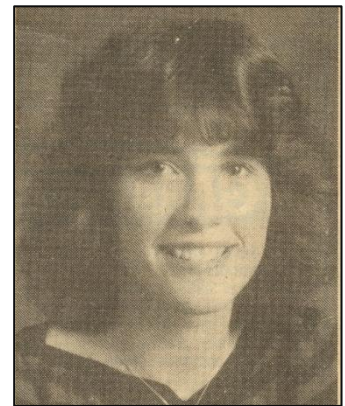
When Steve and David were about 13 they talked to Dennis Leavitt about moving pipe for him. He agreed and gave them a couple of fields of grain to irrigate. Since they weren't old enough to drive, I got up with them at 5:00 a.m. and we drove to the fields. I sat in the pickup while they moved their lines.

Moving pipe in the grain fields wasn't too difficult and they got along pretty well.

One day Dennis told them that he was going to start irrigating the spuds

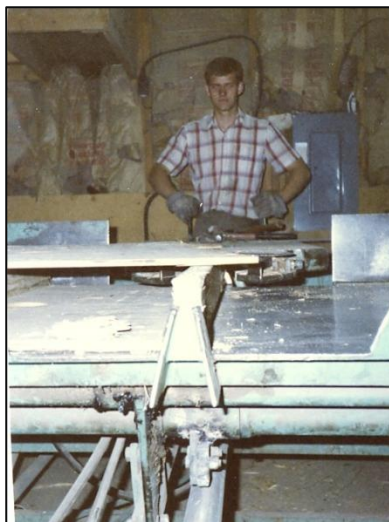
and so the next morning I drove them to the spud field and read a magazine while I waited until they were through. Normally it took them about an hour and a half to get their lines moved, but this particular morning it took much longer. Finally I saw them coming in the distance, hunched over and looking dismal! At first I thought they were being overly dramatic, but when they got to me I could see that they were nearly in tears. The spud field was much more difficult to work in when it was muddy and carrying the big pipes was about more than they could do. They had not been able to finish.

We didn't know what to do and finally decided to go recruit one of their good friends, Kay Martin, to come help them finish. We returned to



Moreland, knocked on Kay's door, woke him up, and begged him to help. Kay was a couple of years older and a strong, muscled kid. He was so sweet to come to our rescue. We returned to the field and they were able to complete the task. The twins struggled with that pipe moving job for the remainder of the summer and when it was over, they pledged that they would never, ever, move pipe again for summer employment.

At some point the twins started a lawn mowing business. Most of their clients were elderly widows. They used the little green Toyota to haul the mower from job to job throughout the area. When they got a little older they wanted more regular work. Their Dad had Neil Miller as an insurance client and asked him if he ever needed summer help. He said that he did and hired both of them to work in his honey plant. They were only 14 at the time but worked a full 40 hour week. Their place of employment was only a couple of miles from our home and they rode their bikes to the plant, spent the day, and rode home, completely independent and without a need for a vehicle.



Stephani, Shauntel, and Jonie were on several different work schedules and juggled cars to get back and forth from Keslers Market so the vehicle



situation during the summers was especially challenging. One day my mother called from San Francisco where she and Dad were serving a mission. She said that their little Volkswagen Rabbit was just not gutsy enough to navigate the big city traffic and they wondered if we needed it to help with our car needs. It just so

happened that Steve had some business in the Boise area and he flew from there to San Francisco and drove the Rabbit home that next week! What a boon it was for us! With five cars we were able to work things out and keep up with all the summer jobs and activities.

With the three older girls working at Kesler's, it seemed natural that Steve and David would follow in their footsteps but they were recruited by Randy Cox to work at his pallet business. Randy gathered up used pallets and then repaired them in his shop and sold them to local businesses. Steve and David set their own hours and got paid by the number of pallets they repaired. They worked together and made more money than if they had worked for minimum wages at Keslers. They worked for Randy for several years. It proved to be a wonderful arrangement for both parties. Of course, the muscles they developed as they threw around the heavy pallets were an added bonus and a source of pride.

[David] *After working for Randy Cox for awhile, Steve and I felt it was time for a pay raise. We carefully planned our verbal request and made the request when he arrived on the job site. He agreed to an increase. Later that day, I accidentally backed into his truck with the forklift and felt quite sheepish about the increase I had*

requested. Fortunately, he was able to hammer out the dent I made in his truck without any apparent damage."

Becky followed in her sibling's footsteps and mowed at the cemetery, wormed, took care of a neighbor's pets while she was gone, and rogued potatoes. When Becky was a junior and senior she played varsity sports and the after-school practices made it impossible for her to have an after-school job at Keslers. A friend of hers, Candice Harrington, suggested that the two of them clean her Dad's business (Rocky Mountain Machinery) two nights a week. They were both heavily involved with school activities so this arrangement was perfect for them since they could set their own hours. This job also extended into the summer months and she worked as an errand girl/secretary/janitor with Candice for the summer prior to leaving for college.

John inherited the mowing business from the twins and made the rounds each week. He was fast and had a charm that really won the hearts of all his clients. He also worked some for Randy Cox although not as extensively as Steve and David did. He moved pipe and mowed at the Thomas-Riverside Cemetery and he and his best friend, David Hammond, worked together



moving pipe for part of a summer. Later he was hired to work on the grounds crew at the Bingham Memorial Hospital. The day he arrived home after being issued his name tag and identity badge, we all had a good laugh because it said, "John Larsen" "Gardner" instead of gardener. His last job was working after school and on Saturdays at Kesler's Market.

Following is an account by John describing his memories of his Dad's work ethic: *Dad knew the importance of work. I remember sitting in the tractor with him as he plowed the fields and of helping him build the family table in our garage. He would call me his "gopher" (because I would "go for" things) or his "right hand man" and I loved to help him work. Not a Saturday would go by that we didn't have some project to work on. We would cut down old trees for firewood, work on the garden, put in fences, load the wood box, or work in the yard. There was no such thing as spare time; there was always something to be done. I can see now how this has carried over into the rest of my life in numerous ways. Not only do I value work and deem it as one of the greatest joys and privileges of life, but I also feel uncomfortable with inactivity. I always have to be doing something or I feel lazy and unproductive.*



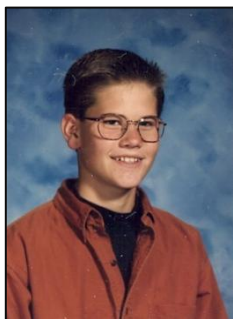
All the kids liked the mowing jobs the best because they paid so well but keeping the mowers up and running was a big job for Steve and sometimes he questioned whether we were really dollars ahead when all was taken into consideration. But we both knew that we were not only in the business for financial reasons but to give the kids a chance to run their own small

business and learn to deal with and please their employers.

Over the years their clients included several widows who employed them to help with other yard projects as well as mowing. Elaine Jones was one of their favorites and was always very generous with them. In the fall she had several trees that produced an immense amount of leaves and often we went over as a family and raked and bagged her leaves, sometimes even in the snow if we had an unseasonable early winter and the leaves just wouldn't let go.

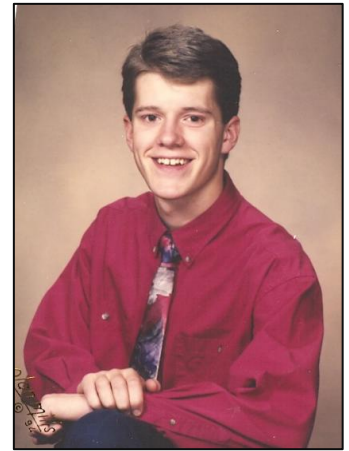
The summer before Mike's junior year he applied to work in Kesler's Garden Center. He loved working with plants and was really good at it. Although most of the children didn't work during the school year until their senior years, Jack Kesler talked him into staying on and so Mike worked right on through his junior and senior years of high school (two nights a week and every Saturday) besides being heavily involved in a lot of school activities.

Paul followed in his older sibling's footsteps and mowed lawns and helped at the cemetery. About the time that Paul was 15, Steve suggested that he ought to consider working at scout camp. Paul was a very close friend of his cousin, Christian Gentry, and the two of them hatched a plot to work at scout camp and tent together. Christian's family lived in Show Low, Arizona, and so he lived with us that summer. He and Paul spent their weekdays at Camp Little Lemhi in the Palisades area and came home each weekend to attend church and have a touch of



family. The demands of the job were challenging but Paul and Christian were kindred spirits and it proved to be a good experience.

The next summer Paul signed on to be a river guide at the Salmon River High Adventure Base. This was a step up from his duties at Little Lemhi and involved kayaking and other water activities. In preparation for



this work, Paul went to a training session where he was taught how to kayak. This training took place in the Blackfoot swimming pool. The trainer had each boy get into a kayak and then would turn him upside down. The trainee then had to "right" himself using his paddle and the techniques he had been taught.

The day of the training Paul was involved in a piano festival and tried out for scholarships just prior to arriving at the pool. When he got in the kayak and the instructor turned him upside down, Paul followed the instructions and tried to move his paddle in a way that should have turned him upright. It didn't work and he tried it again, all the time holding his breath and fighting the panic that was building.

All at once he thought of his piano competition and of the way he would have to "steel" himself during a performance to keep the panic down and be able to recall the piece. Immediately he used that same technique. The panic subsided and he successfully righted the kayak. Of course, with continued practice it became easier, but being suspended upside down under water (moving water at times) was never a walk in the park and I worried most of the summer about him and was grateful when that particular job came to an end!

In fact, it came to an early end because Paul wrenched his back towards the end of the

summer and his boss decided to send him home so he could get some medical attention.

One night I was downstairs with SaraKay watching TV and I heard someone upstairs. I couldn't imagine who it was since both Daddy and Tim were accounted for. Next thing I knew Paul strolled into the family room. What a wonderful surprise! He explained about his wrenched back, and the next morning I called and got an appointment for him to see our family physician, Dr. Gary Haddock.

After the appointment Paul told me that when Dr. Haddock found out that Paul was a river guide, he proceeded to tell Paul of a time that he (Dr. Haddock) had a near-death experience while kayaking. After Paul told me this story, I commented that it was pretty amazing that Dr. Haddock had nearly lost his life kayaking. Paul's response: "Mom, anyone who has ever kayaked has had a near-death experience!" I guess it is just the nature of the beast!

Following is Paul's own story of this summer experience: *My dad, who works for the Boy Scouts of America, informed me one day of the need for more river guides at the Salmon River High Adventure Base and asked me to consider working there. It seemed an odd request since I could hardly even swim. However, when I prayed with respect to the offer and received a definite answer, I knew the Lord had something in store for me in working there.*

The preparation was difficult. My dad took me to the swimming pool several times a week to learn how to swim. I attended several river guide training sessions (which made me even more aware of my shortcomings.) I fought my fear of

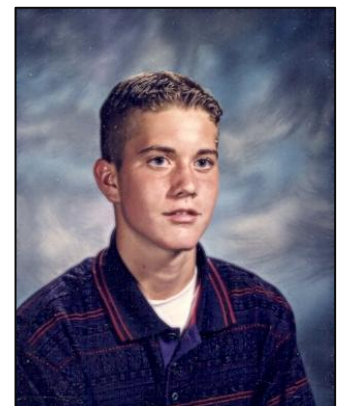


water as I tried to learn the barrel roll in the kayak. Though I finally became a certified lifeguard, I still felt unprepared for the job. After arriving at the base, it took several more weeks of intense boating to gain the capability and confidence needed to be an effective river guide.

The most challenging part of the experience, however, had nothing to do with water or kayaks. At the adventure base,

I lived in a large tent with six other youths whose values were very different from mine. At nighttime, I struggled to keep their off-colored conversations out of my ears and mind. Many nights, I tried to fall asleep while plugging my ears. I became bitter towards them, which I knew was wrong. Thus, trying instead to become their friend, I got quite close to several of them and could express my feelings with respect to their behavior. Slowly, they began to change, as did I, becoming more able to appreciate them and their many good qualities. The Lord taught me an important lesson on the power of patience, tolerance, and love.

When Tim was 16 and old enough to work at a regular job, he decided to break with family tradition and applied at Basic American Foods as a factory worker. Once he got on he was able to work summers as well as during Christmas break and harvests. The 12 hour shifts from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. about did him in, but he stayed with it and had quite a nest-egg by



the time he was ready for college.

[Tim] *“My most memorable jobs in high school included working at Basic American Foods, moving pipe, building and destroying pallets at R&P Enterprises, picking worms, mowing the cemetery, and selling sunglasses over the internet. The most exciting of these jobs was picking worms. We would irrigate the pasture and the back yard to get the moisture into the ground and bring the worms close to the surface. Then we would mix a chemical in a garbage barrel with water and dump it out over the grass. The mixture suffocated the worms and required them to come to the surface for air. We would quickly grab as many as possible before they returned to their tunnels. We would then drive into Blackfoot to a worm store that would resell the worms to fishermen. We would get \$2 to \$2.25 a pound depending on the demand. Because of the irrigation schedule and limited amount of property, we would usually only worm one morning a week. On a good day, we would harvest about 15 pounds of worms in a four to five hour time span.”*

SaraKay babysat, worked spud harvests, mowed, trimmed, and moved sprinkler pipe at the cemetery. One summer she worked labeling honey bears for Gorder’s Honey and then worked as a custodian, thoroughly cleaning the schools in the area over the summer months. The summer following her senior year in high school she worked at Kesler’s Market and again the August-December following her first year at BYU-I.

All of this work was such a blessing during those years of heavy financial demands. The children not only had their own spending money but saved for college and learned to be frugal. Steve and I were proud of them for all their efforts. These experiences taught them a strong work ethic and enabled them to be successful as they

went to college and tackled the challenges of getting their education.

SPUD HARVEST

When my parents moved to Shelley I was in third grade and soon learned about “spud harvest”. This was a two-week recess from school, usually the last week of September and the first week of October. The reason for the recess was because the farmers needed the students to help harvest with the harvest since there was a very short window of time in the fall when the potatoes were ready and when the weather was cooperative.

In those days the potatoes were mostly harvested with manual labor. A windrower would dig the potatoes and pile them on top of the furrow. Pickers would bag these potatoes in gunny sacks and then stand these sacks up in a row for a crew to pick up and load onto a flatbed truck. They would then be transported to a nearby earthen cellar where they would be stored until the farmer was ready to market them.

Many transient laborers, usually Negroes, came into the area to work in the harvest. When picking, they wore a wide leather belt that had two huge hooks on the front and two on the back. The hooks on the back were loaded with empty gunny sacks and the two on the front held one sack open so that the worker could fill it, using both hands to pick. He (or she) would bend over, straddle the row and pick potatoes, dragging the sack and picking until it was full. Then he would unhook it from his belt, set it aside, and start on another sack. He would keep track of his sacks and was paid by the bag, about seven cents a 100 wt.

Since there was never enough migrant help the students worked during the two-week recess. Since most of us were not strong enough to pick the way the Negroes did, we had our own

method. Two kids would work as a team. Each would have a wire basket and pick two rows that were side by side. When both baskets were full, they would take turns dumping these baskets into the gunny sack and then continue on, keeping track of the number of sacks. At the end of the day, the farmer paid them for what they had picked. It was a great job for kids who wanted to earn some money and, depending on the weather and condition of the field, it was kind of fun.

When I was old enough to help during harvest, my experience was very different from most of my peers. My father had beet plots that needed to be harvested and so I worked on his beet crew for the two weeks. We worked in the beet fields during the day and then extracted pulp samples from the beets in a lab at the Lincoln Sugar Factory at night.

In the fields, the men on the crew loosened the beets with a shovel, moving down the row to where the experimental plot ended. I followed along behind the digger, straddled the row, grabbed the beet with the hook on the end of my foot-long knife, pulled it up into my other hand and held it while I topped it with the beet knife. I would then toss the beet into a pile and someone would label the pile, bag the beets, and load them onto a truck. We ran them through the lab that night, labeling each sample with the information on the card in the bag. The data thus obtained was sent to the U and I Sugar Company in Salt Lake for further evaluation. Daddy always stressed to us that we needed to be precise in our work so that the information would be correct.

So, my spud harvest was really beet harvest but it was still a time of long hours, hard work and sometimes bitter cold working conditions. I might add that this annual harvest usually put several hundred dollars in my pocket and enabled me to meet many of my personal

financial needs. The years working with and for my Dad on these harvest crews were a unique and treasured part of my growing up years.

One time when I was a student at Ricks College and Daddy was driving me back to Rexburg, we drove past Idaho Falls and the smell of the Lincoln sugar factory was so strong that I had this wave of nostalgia wash over me. It was the first time in about eight years that I hadn't been involved in harvest and I realized how much I missed it.

When I married Steve, he worked for his Dad on the farm for the first two summers, but we were back in Provo each fall so we weren't a part of harvest for many years. When we moved back to the Blackfoot area about seven years later to farm with Allan, potato harvest again became a part of our lives.

Potato harvesting equipment had gone through quite a metamorphosis since I was a child. Harvesting was done with a combine that picked up the tubers and passed them over a series of chains which bounced off a lot of the dirt before loading them into a truck that was being driven parallel to the moving combine. There was usually a crew that rode the combine, picking off the huge rocks and clods as well as the potato vines that came across. This was always a miserable job since it was cold and dirty and the hours were long. There was another crew that worked in the cellar, again pulling rocks and clods off the belt and cleaning up the spuds before they went into the pile in the cellar.

As soon as we moved to our new home on Allan's farm it became very convenient for the kids to help with the harvest. I don't remember exactly how old they were when they started but I do remember that when Steve and David were nine they were hired to climb into the bed of the truck and push the potatoes onto the belt in the bottom of the bed to help with the unloading.

Although the hours were long, I think all the kids enjoyed being a part of the crew. As they got older they also ran the piler and drove truck.

If the windrower happened to get too far ahead and the combine broke down, everyone had to wait for it to be repaired or go into the field and



pick up the spuds manually since the exposed spuds couldn't be left out overnight. If the temperatures dipped below 34-36 degrees they would be compromised and not hold up well in storage. This all-too-common situation led to some very late nights for the entire crew. Usually I would get the younger children to bed in the evening and then I would go to the cellar and send some of the younger crew members home for the day. They always welcomed the reprieve and it was nice for me to feel like I was a part of things, too.

When there were breakdowns there was time for the cellar crew to chat or grab a treat. This broke up the monotony of picking clods for hours on end. A wonderful camaraderie would develop between the members of the crew which usually

consisted of Mexicans, school kids, and adults who were working to bring in some extra money. It was easy while working on the belt to pass the time with visiting and even some tom-foolery. Sometimes the kids would have contests to see who could come up with the strangest looking potato or the biggest. It wasn't unheard of for someone to chuck a rotten potato at someone else on working on the belt just to liven things up a bit. It was also fairly common for some flirtations to develop among the single members of the crew which added interest. Harvest work had a way of putting everyone on a level playing field, united for a common purpose. It was especially nice for the kids to have the hundreds of dollars they were able to earn.

The following was written by Stephani about her harvest experience: *"....and of course there was always potato harvest. Lots of memories there, from gathering seed potatoes for Grandpa to climbing up top of the potatoes to even things out...and telling stories of the haunted potato man. Grandma Larsen would bring us candy bars and hot chocolate and I remember singing song and memorizing the Articles of Faith while working on the belt. We'd try and rig up a radio to listen to general conference, too. Sometimes I'd climb in the truck and take out the boards and unload the potatoes onto the belt. If I close my eyes, I can still see the potato belts and piles of rocks and clods (remember Mike's lost glasses?). We'd always get nervous when Grandpa was around and one time when we were living in Rockford he offered to give us a ride home...then he backed his pickup truck into a trailer and shattered the glass on his truck shell. I remember working at the cellar at the other farm and there was a boxcar there that was outfitted so someone could live there. We took every break and went and cleaned it and organized it (and found a can of*

coffee—shocking!) Spud harvest made me love Sundays and showers!

[David] *Alan Reid had come to visit Steve and me during potato harvest. While Steve and I were emptying a particularly dirty load, we heard a faint yell. Alan was clowning around near the front of the truck and was slowly being sucked down into the potatoes as the belt pulled them down and out. By the time he realized it, he was too far down to pull himself out and too embarrassed to let a full scream out of his mouth. We were able to stop the belt and inconspicuously (so we thought) pull him from the potatoes with his ego somewhat intact.*

Learning to drive potato truck was a big challenge for Steve and me. Dad took the time to teach us and always showed such confidence in us and our abilities. Even after the first day when we came home exhausted and so certain that driving truck wasn't for us, Dad provided the motivation we needed to carry on the next day and things greatly improved from that time forward. Steve and I had an uncanny ability to run over risers, almost tip trucks over when coming off the scale, or back into Grandpa's shiny red pickup. How Grandpa put up with us over those years without firing us I'll never know.

[Steve] *"Probably the most memorable of my jobs was spud harvest and the fear I had of driving truck. For two consecutive years, I backed into Grandpa's nice GMC pickup truck...once in the field after a combine repair (I thought I had run over his tool box when I saw his arms flailing, but when I pulled forward, I saw two deep crevices in the hood where the feeder for the potatoes dug in.) The other was backing into it*

as I backed into the cellar and the latter got stuck between the hood and the side. When Grandpa came into the cellar and exclaimed, "Who ran into my truck again?!" I patted him on the shoulder and said, "Grandpa, let's go talk outside."

Those same couple of years Dave backed off the scale and almost tipped the truck over. I ran over there as it was tipping so that I could hold it up...yeah, right. I would be capable of holding up 25 tons! I ran into the boom, ran over a riser that broke the mainline and almost plowed through Ignacio's trailer when I was in a run-away truck.

At the end of the year, Grandpa said, "I have never had so many accidents in all of my farming!" We tried to warn Dad and Grandpa we wouldn't be good drivers, but they just wouldn't listen."

Allan was always so patient with the kids despite all the pressures he was under. They once commented that despite the long hours and frequent breakdowns, they had never heard their Grandpa Allan swear or lose his temper. All things considered, that was amazing!



After Steve quit farming and we moved in off the desert the kids continued to work for their Grandpa each harvest. When he quit farming, the kids worked for Uncle Gary who took over the farm. Just working that two-three weeks each fall gave each of them a feeling of being vested in it and to this day they have fond memories of "spud harvest".

When SaraKay came of age to work in harvest, she didn't have any extended family members who were in the farming business and so she hired on to work for Richard Tominaga. He was a

member of our ward bishopric and had a big farming operation, leasing some ground on the reservation as well as having his own land. I was excited for SaraKay to have the “harvest” experience but the first year she was the only girl working on the sorter belt and she was miserable. At my insistence she stayed with it because she knew that she needed the money for all of her school involvements.

Fortunately that first year, Camille Shupe, a married sister from our ward, was driving truck for Richard and she befriended SaraKay and helped her survive. The next year I proposed that SaraKay suggest to Karina Jenks that she get a job with Richard so that the two of them could car-pool and work together. She did and that year and her senior year “harvest” turned into a good experience for her.

I suppose that a few years down the road as new innovations remove the need for “many hands” at harvest time, the schools in the area will discontinue the tradition. Already new potato varieties that can be harvested earlier have altered the way a lot of farmers do business so I’m sure a change is on the horizon. Thank goodness that we had the opportunity to participate in harvest while we were having our big family. It was truly a financial God-send for us! I also appreciate Allan and Gary’s willingness to hire our kids despite their inexperience and occasional antics.

MUSIC

Although I was raised in a musical family, my main involvement was in choral groups. I had an ability to hear the alto part and loved harmonizing. I was selected as a member of a high school sextet my junior and senior years and thoroughly enjoyed the chance to perform



throughout the community. My neighbor, Kathryn Browning, and I were often invited to sing duets and performed on school talent assemblies as well as at church services.

My mother was a good alto and my dad had a wonderful bass voice. For as long as I can remember they were in the ward choir and even sang duets together over the years. One memory I have is of my mother singing as she went about her

duties at home. It was always comforting to hear this and it seemed that not much could be wrong in my world if she felt like singing. Her favorite music was from Broadway musicals and I would often awake to music on the record player from Rogers and Hammerstein or some other contemporary composers.

I had taken piano lessons for six months when I was in fifth grade but I didn’t enjoy practicing and soon convinced my mother to let me quit. Not too many years passed before I regretted quitting but by then I was so far behind the other kids my age that I never took it up again.

It wasn’t until I was in college that I was introduced to classical music. It was love at first sound! When I married into Steve’s family, I could see how important music was in their home and it was something I hoped to have in my own home.

Steve’s mother, Barbara, had always loved music and played both the piano and organ as well as participating in choirs and small ensembles. Although she had only attended one semester of college, she always said that she was grateful that she had taken as many music courses that semester as she possibly could.



Karen and play ping-pong.

When Stephani and Shauntel first began practicing I sat on the piano bench with each one and went over the lesson material that Barbara assigned. At first I thought they needed to practice for an hour a day, but Barbara counseled me to have them start with 15 minutes and gradually

When she married Allan, she expressed a desire for a piano and for their first Christmas as newlyweds, Allan bought her a beautiful piano. He would often tell how his father was unhappy that he had been so extravagant but Allan always defended his decision saying that it was the best investment he ever made! Over the years that piano became a treasured possession. Several of their children took piano lessons and many of them played other musical instruments as well.

When Stephani was about eight, Barbara and Allan bought a new baby grand piano. One day Allan arrived at our doorstep with their old piano in the back of his pickup. He and Steve moved it into our living room. Barbara could see that we needed a piano and gave it to us so that Stephani and Shauntel could take piano lessons. She even offered to give them free lessons.

I guess I had been so busy with the other children that I hadn't even thought about piano lessons but getting that piano changed all that. The two girls rode the school bus to Grandma Barbara's once a week and she gave them lessons. They both had a natural aptitude for it and enjoyed the one-on-one time with their Grandma. When their lesson was over Grandma Barbara would always give them a treat and then they would go downstairs with

increase the time as they progressed. She was so good to give me advice on how to bring them along and I will be forever grateful to her for mentoring me through those early years. Barbara taught Stephani and Shauntel for two years and then they started with Enid Williams. When Stephen and David were about eight they also started taking piano from Enid and then Becky started with Barbara.

I don't remember the twins taking lessons from Barbara but Becky did and it was always a sweet experience for her. She described it this way: *"Her house was always so clean and smelled really good—often of baking bread. I remember watching her brush melted butter on the tops of*



the hot loaves. Her living room seemed like the most special place in the world and I loved playing on her beautiful piano."

Having several children taking piano lessons created a problem with the logistics of everyone needing practice time. We decided that the best time for getting practicing done was in the morning before they left for school but since we lived on the desert and all the children got on the school bus at about 7:20 a.m. it became a real challenge.

One day I was thinking about the situation and I realized that what we needed was another piano in the house. That thought was so preposterous that I felt I shouldn't even entertain it! And yet as the weeks passed it became increasingly difficult for all the kids to get their time at the piano.

One day a neighbor, Diane Belnap, approached me with a proposition. She said that they were trying to pull together some money for a down payment on a home and that she had heard me mention needing another piano. They owned an old upright and were willing to sell it to us for \$200. It was pretty beat up and nothing much to look at but it gave us another keyboard in the house and we bought it. We put it in our bedroom and each morning both pianos would be used and practicing got completed before the bus came.



I deemed this incident a miracle. I hadn't really even dared to pray about needing another piano since it seemed so extravagant but the Lord granted me the desire of my heart and opened the way for the children to develop their talents. I saw this again and again through the years as we struggled to find ways to afford lessons. At times I negotiated with piano teachers to let me bring three kids to fill two lesson times, each taking a 20 minute lesson. At other times we would alternate weeks and have four children take every other week. Of course this innovative solution only worked because I would augment their lessons with some personal tutoring at home.

During those years when we felt like we couldn't afford private lessons for anything but piano, David took band at school and SaraKay joined the school strings program and they were able to get some good training that way. One time we held our own private Larsen Family Piano Recital and invited friends and family to attend.

One of the memories I cherish is of our musical Christmas programs at Barbara and Allan's. It was on these occasions that the kids would get to perform for the extended family. They each knew they would be expected to do this and although it was a source of consternation for some, it motivated them all to continue with their musical studies to please Grandma Barbara. One year I particularly remember because the

oldest six kids played John Phillips Sousa's famous, "Stars and Stripes Forever". Before performing they removed the piano bench and with six of them kneeling at the keyboard, each with one hand on it, they played the piece. They had dressed in red, white, and blue for the occasion. It was a real hit!

Once we had Stephani taking from Elaine Madsen, Shauntel from Marlene Hillam, Jonie from Enid Williams, Steve from

Sandra Shelley, David, Becky and John from Lona Mae Sorenson.

When Shauntel started taking from Elaine, both she and Stephani would drive themselves to Elaine's home in Blackfoot in the green Toyota in the dark and cold of early Monday mornings. They both claimed the heater didn't work well and they would drive the entire way without much warmth until the last few minutes. The group taking from Lona Mae had similar memories although I was the designated driver for that bunch. We would leave early Tuesday morning (about 5:15) in the cold and dark and everyone would bundle up in their warm blanket and sleep all the way to Blackfoot. We rotated as to who took the first lesson (three students for two spots) and the other two curled up in their blankets and went back to sleep on Lona Mae's couch or downstairs in front of her wood burning stove until I roused them for their lesson.

I'd like to comment on each of the children and some of their musical involvements over the years.

Stephani led the way. She had a wonderful touch at the piano and did especially well in competitions. She seemed to have an ability to interpret the music and a sensitivity that was rare in a student her age. She competed as a



sophomore, junior, and senior for Crawford Cup, winning first runner-up as a sophomore and junior and taking 1st place her senior year. She especially loved Elaine Madsen as a teacher and they shared a special student/teacher bond that was such a blessing to her.

Some of her memories: *"I remember working out practice times with the old upright piano. Sometimes practicing in the early morning while I leaned on the edge of the piano and tried to sleep while doing scales. Setting the timer and checking it every five minutes to see how long was left. Crying with frustration over a song and having mom come in and sit with me while I tried to work it through. I remember I played in a recital and forgot everything after the first line except for the last line, so that's what I played. Someone afterwards said, 'That was a very short song.' Played in church when the heater/air conditioner kicked on and blew the music off the piano. Taking lessons from Elaine Madsen. She kept nail clippers on her piano and would play excerpts of music for us. She was very solemn and intense about the music and would hold or touch your hands to get the right positions."*

Shauntel started taking lessons at the same time as Stephani although she was a year younger. Shauntel had a wonderful ability to pick up a piece of music and sight read it with ease. Because of this she was well known for her



talent, frequently invited to accompany groups and individuals and in her senior year was selected as “Most Talented.” She won Crawford Cup as a sophomore and also was privileged to take for a short time from Elaine Madsen before she (Elaine) retired for health reasons.

Her sophomore year she was part of a girls’ choir and Marva Jensen, her choir director, asked her to accompany several numbers that the choir would perform. She worked hard on them and had them ready by the time Marva was ready to work on them in the classroom.

The day of the performance, when Shauntel arrived home from school, she mentioned that Marva had changed her mind and said that she was going to have Shauntel perform with the choir instead of accompany. I was furious and came very close to calling Marva and giving her a piece of my mind. But, I didn’t and later that evening, as Shauntel performed with the choir, I realized why Marva had changed her mind. Shauntel was such a natural performer and really added class to the choral group. That was the beginning of many opportunities Shauntel had to perform and became one of her favorite activities throughout the rest of her high school years.

When Jonie arrived to live with us I had already decided that I wouldn’t push piano on her since I felt like I was about “pushed out” just keeping the others on task. On the way home from picking her up on her first day with us, she asked if she could take piano lessons and I didn’t have the heart to say “no.” When I



contacted Enid about working Jonie into her schedule, she offered to give her free lessons. I was very touched by her generosity and can’t remember to this day whether we took her up on the offer but Jonie did start lessons with her and continued for several years.

Jonie was the only child that I didn’t ever have to push. In fact, the biggest problem we had was trying to get her off the piano so the other kids could get their practicing done. She would pick up a piece of music and play and play it until all of us were tired of it; but because she loved playing she advanced rapidly and did very well.

While in high school she was asked to perform a concerto with the high school band. This was a wonderful opportunity but she kept procrastinating memorizing it so I started sitting with her at the piano and even went to school on the days she was practicing with the band so that I could ensure that she was where she needed to be in her preparation. The night of the performance she played beautifully but it had been a real battle and we were both grateful to have it successfully completed.



Steve and David started taking from Enid Williams when they were about eight. At that time in her teaching career Enid was using the Suzuki Method which was to teach by rote. This method was highly recommended by many but I had my doubts about it. Each day I would sit at the piano with one and then the other, helping them with their

lessons. If I remember right, I sat with them for about the first two years of their lessons.

When it came time for them to start reading notes, they had a difficult time realizing that the notes on the printed page were there for a reason and that they needed to read them and follow them. I thought for a while that we were never going to get that message across. They had played rote for so long that they didn't have the concept of reading music. It was pretty crazy during those early years when they were both beginners and sometimes I wanted to call it quits, but they were both willing and so we hung on.

One time they were playing a duet together at a recital. They started the piece and one of them would play a wrong note or get the rhythm wrong and then they would look at each other and scowl and start again. It happened several times until I thought a fight was going to break out right there on the piano bench. Thank goodness they eventually got it together.

When they were freshman in high school I asked them if they would mind quitting lessons so that we could afford to start some of the younger kids. At that time we had seven taking from four different teachers and I knew that financially and emotionally we couldn't handle any more. They were sweet about it but I've always regretted



that they didn't have the chance to keep going. They were very musical and doing well.

Becky started taking piano when she

was about eight. Her own remembrances are as follows: *"I remember not wanting to practice and Mom and I would fight over it. When I was an eighth*



grader Mom said that she was through fighting with me over practicing. If I wanted to take my piano seriously and practice without complaining, then she would continue to pay for lessons. If I didn't want to do that, then she would not pay for lessons anymore. That hit me really hard. I finally answered her that even if she had to tie me to the piano bench to get me to practice, then I wanted her to do it. I could tell that Stephani and Shauntel were having lots of great experiences because of their piano playing and I wanted that in my life when I got older.

At that point I started to take a little more responsibility for my practicing. I remember lying in bed at night, listening to Shauntel play songs like the theme from "Man From Snowy River." I loved hearing her play. Playing the piano gave me a lot of self confidence. It was wonderful to have something that I could do well. Although performing was always difficult for me, it gave me a goal to work toward and a way to receive positive feedback and recognition from my peers and the community. Music was a critical part of my emotional development and identity.

At one point in her development Lona Mae gave her a concerto that was a real challenge. Until that time Becky had been about average in her playing. She had been assigned for several weeks to get going on the concerto but finally at one lesson Lona May said that if she didn't have

it well in hand by the next lesson, she didn't think Becky would be able to have it ready for the upcoming festival. That week Becky set a goal to play through it 100 times. This was no small feat considering that it was about 10 pages long. When the week was over, Lona May was totally amazed at how well Becky played it and that seemed to be the beginning of Becky's commitment to becoming proficient.



boys would show up unannounced and go downstairs into the bathroom, close the door and practice. They said the acoustics were best in that room but of course, I was worrying that the toilet needed cleaning or that there were wet towels on the floor. This bunch of guys stayed together over their high school years and charmed many an audience with their music.

John also had a lot of natural ability. When asked about lessons he wrote: *"I'm sure it wasn't always the case, but I only recall piano lessons being on mornings that were 10 degrees below zero. I remember we would warm up the car in advance (5 a.m.) But it was still bitter cold when we'd leave. I would even bring my big brown deer blanket off my bed to wrap up in. Once we got there, I would go down to Lona Mae's basement where her wood-burning stove would keep me toasty and warm. I would go back to sleep down there until it was my turn for the lesson."*

Although John persisted (despite the cold mornings), it was his voice that became his favored instrument. He had a wonderful voice and early in high school he formed a quartet with Dave Hammond, Brent Scott, and Karl Anderson. They loved to sing after the style of a popular group of that time, the Nylons. They would meet each week to practice and started performing at events around the community. It always drove me crazy when the

Michael took lessons for several years and had a lot of talent but as he got older his heart wasn't in it. He was involved in all kinds of student government activities and got into Chamber Singers so eventually I let him quit. He had a great voice and enjoyed singing and got good parts in both "The Music Man" and "Shenandoah" with a group of his best friends.

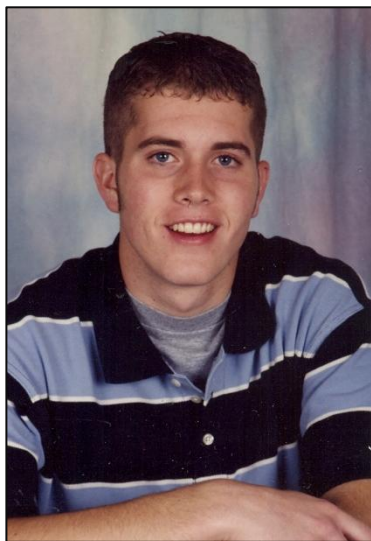
Paul was the surprise with his music. He started taking piano lessons but for a long time he struggled. But, he kept plugging away at it. When he was about 14 he played a Toccata for a music festival that had a lot of fast, tricky fingering and did a great job with it. He did so well that it seemed to motivate him further and he just got better and better. He took from Lona Mae Sorenson initially but eventually ended up with Linnea Hammond.



I had approached Linnea before about teaching Paul but she didn't have an opening. As a junior Paul competed for Crawford Cup and Linnea heard him play and offered to make an opening for him. He was so excited about that and she really made a difference in his playing.

After a couple of lessons Linnea commented to me that her only regret was that she hadn't had him as a student sooner. He was so teachable and disciplined in his practicing that she could see how much he would have progressed under her tutelage. He won Crawford Cup his senior year and went on to take private piano at Ricks College just for the sheer enjoyment.

One thing I missed about Paul when he left for college was his Sunday morning music. He would get all ready for his meetings and then he would sit at the piano and play hymn after hymn. It brought such a sweet feeling into our home and helped him perfect the hymns besides bringing us enjoyment.



When I started Tim on the piano it was a real eye-opener for me. We would sit together for his practice time and he would play the piece through, occasionally missing some

notes. When I would try to correct him he would balk at having to do it "perfect". He told me that he didn't want to play it exactly the way Mozart wanted it played and that he liked it better his way. The more I worked with Tim the more I realized that he knew I was usually tired and that he could resist me and I would probably give in. Until he started lessons I hadn't noticed this but our time together on the piano bench helped me see what I needed to do and gave us some

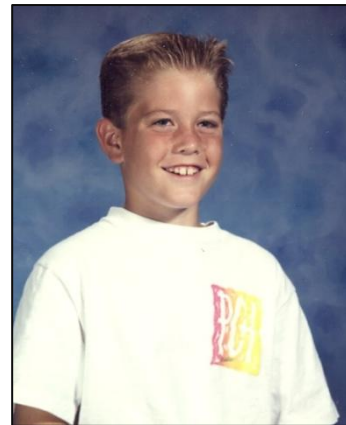
one-on-one each day. Tim had a lot of natural ability and received several piano awards at the local piano festival each spring.

I felt like Tim's music played a key role in his development as a teenager. He had always been a great athlete and played on 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th grade school basketball teams. Just prior to his junior year, he developed some health problems and had hernia surgery. This put him out of commission when he would have been preparing for tryouts. We approached the coach about the situation but there were too many talented athletes in the grade behind him and he lost his spot on the team. This was devastating to him. In an effort to fill the void left by this loss, he started taking vocal lessons from Paul Elison.

At first it seemed like a lost cause, but the longer he took lessons the better he got. By the end of his junior year he took first place at District Solo competition and went on to state, placing 3rd there. He was involved in Chamber Singers and also won Crawford Cup in the male vocal division. It was just a thrill to see his success in

his music even though he missed the chance to play varsity basketball.

When SaraKay was growing up she seemed to have a natural aptitude for music. Several times I found myself wishing that we could afford to give her violin lessons but the money was always an issue since I was already paying for piano lessons. One day she came home from



school with a proposition for me. Her good friend, Angela Winder, had approached her about taking violin lessons from her mother, Coleen. Colleen loved the violin but had not had any of her own children play it and she wanted Angela to follow in her footsteps. Angela didn't especially want to but said that she would if SaraKay would do it with her. This offer of free lessons was a wonderful blessing and we quickly located a ½ size violin and started. It was such a fun adventure for both SaraKay and me since neither of us had ever had any exposure to strings. I felt that the Lord had intervened again in our behalf in providing this beginning for SaraKay.

When SaraKay got into middle school several of the musicians in the community joined forces to encourage a strings program in the school. SaraKay and Angela were the nucleus for that program and several of their friends joined in and have continued to encourage each other in this pursuit.

One advantage SaraKay has had with her piano was that when Paul vacated his lesson time upon leaving for college, Linnea offered to take SaraKay on as a student. Normally Linnea only had advanced students but she had enjoyed Paul and felt that SaraKay might be like her older brother. It has been a highlight of SaraKay's life to take from Linnea. She is so gifted and able to really inspire her students. She invited SaraKay to play a concerto with the community orchestra and it was a tremendous challenge but proved to be a wonderful opportunity!

With all the kids taking piano lessons they had an advantage as they got into high school. All of them



were selected to be in Chamber Singers, the top choir at the school. It was such a wonderful opportunity for them to be a part of a group that was challenging and yet so fun.

Now that I am a grandparent, it has been a source of satisfaction for me to visit my married children and see how they are promoting music and the arts in their own families. I often request a private recital when I visit so I can do my part to encourage the grandkids in the development of their talents. I now have not only pianists in the group but grandchildren who play oboe, cello, flute, violin, guitar, and even take dance lessons. What fun to get our extended family together and have them perform as a group! I guess we can say like Allan said that the money that went for promoting music in our home has proven to be a wonderful investment!

The following essay written by Becky in January of 2010 (one year after Steve's passing) provides some memories that I think the whole family can identify with:



This morning as I listened to Jon Schmidt's rendition of "I Can't Help Falling in Love" I was struck with a longing for my dad and a

gratitude for music in my life. I know I am feeling this more keenly right now as the anniversary of Dad's passing approaches.

Mom and Dad each gave me a different part of music. Mom drove me faithfully to lessons early in the morning, prodded me to practice daily, and patiently helped me work through the discouragements of perfecting and performing challenging pieces. She was consistent and encouraging and kept the vision burning of what this talent could do for me in the long run. How grateful I am that she never gave up! She could see music as a tool for character-building, self esteem boosting, and service giving. Music in my life has delivered on all of those fronts and more.

Dad on the other hand was not involved in the daily grind. Dad communicated his love for music in a more indirect but equally profound way. The Sabbath Day was only a faint touch of color in the east when the classical music would wind its way through the house. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir was not far on its heels. Many dark night, riding in the car, the soundtrack of "Dances With Wolves" or some other movie would carry us home. National holidays often began with Dad bugling. Many summer evenings we watched the Colors being retired as Dad's bugling echoed off the surrounding mountains. Gratitude for country and love for God and His creations and a bond with all those listening—these emotions planted themselves deep in my heart with the help of Dad's music.

One musical connection with my parents shared was singing. It seemed that Dad could sing whatever part was needed, and Mom's beautiful alto voice gave stability to the women's section. There was never any doubt that my parents believed the words they sang and I could feel their combined testimony deep in my heart and my soul. A desire to share in this with my parents motivated me to "seek after these things."

Looking back, I don't know if my parents were aware that music was always adding harmony to the spiritual legacy they were creating for us children. Looking forward, I only hope that I can do the same for my kids.

FAMILY PETS

A Larsen family history wouldn't be complete if it didn't include a chapter about family pets. Like most young families we had our share of pets. Now it must be understood right from the outset that we did not live in a world where pets were neutered, spayed, sheared, shorn, licensed, bathed, and generally made to feel like a member of the family. True, we did have an occasional pet that resided inside the house, but for the most part, our pets lived outside. And most frequently, they were dogs. Since I was highly allergic to cats, even a feline holing up in the garage was unacceptable and so everyone accepted the fact that cats were off limits.

Our first family dog was a white Samoyed husky that we acquired from someone while living in Mt. Vernon, Washington. He was a roly, poly, lovable puppy that made the storied journey with us when we moved from Mt. Vernon to Hagerman, Idaho. He was full of fun and a great playmate for the four children. We had lots of room for him to run in our yard in Buhl but we soon discovered that he was better suited for Alaska with his long, thick coat of white hair than for Buhl, Idaho. He would about suffocate during the hot summer months. For that reason and others that don't come readily to mind, we made the decision to get rid of him. Of course, we didn't want the kids to feel too sad about his demise so we concocted a clever story. We told the kids that the dog was joining the police force and that the police would be by shortly to pick him up and take him for his training. The ruse worked and the last we saw of him was as he rode out of sight in the back of a county vehicle.

When we moved to Tabor from Sandy, UT we acquired a German shepherd (of uncertain pedigree.) We thought that it would be nice to have a watch dog since we lived about 15 miles west of Blackfoot in a very remote area, but he didn't seem to be as ferocious as a true watch dog should be. He was usually seen retreating from any threatening situation with his tail between his legs.

Another dog we acquired was a Great Dane that a neighboring family offered to give us free. The only thing that our neighbors failed to mention was that his "droppings" were nearly as big as a full grown cow's and soon our yard was littered with doggy doo everywhere. After a couple weeks of having to check every child's shoes before he or she entered the house, I decided that the Great Dane would have to go. (Another candidate for the police academy?)

When we moved in off the desert we encountered a new problem: the road that ran in front of our property. Many of our dogs learned how fun it was to chase cars and consequently, many of them were casualties of this dangerous practice or were injured so badly that Steve had to put them out of their misery. Of course, this was always an unhappy situation for the children as well as for Steve who was the designated henchman.

Another problem was that since we didn't keep our dogs on a leash, some of them would end up at the neighbor's places, carrying off shoes or anything else that wasn't nailed down. Sometimes the neighbors would call and we

would sheepishly return a stray boot or deer hide. Sometimes the offenses were much worse.

One time our neighbor, Fred Kotter, called and said that our dog was getting into his chicken coop and had killed some of his chickens. I felt badly about this and offered to pay for them but he declined, just asking that we find a way to keep the dog from roaming at night. The very next day I noticed some chicken feathers in the back yard and knew our dog had been at it again. I called a local veterinarian and asked if there was any way of breaking him of the habit and he told me that there was one solution but that it was usually harder on the owners than on the

dog. He said to get a dead chicken and tie it to the neck of the dog so that the dog would have to smell it as it began to rot. He said to let the dog live with it for a couple weeks until the carcass rotted away and usually the dog would be cured of eating chickens ever again. Of course, the owner also had to



tolerate the putrid smell if they had any interaction with their pet and this was where the catch came in. We opted for the pound since by this time the police academy story had lost its credibility.

At some point we began acquiring turtles, snakes, newts, and gerbils. I suspect that Michael was the reason we went through this amphibian stage since he was so fascinated by all things creepy and crawly. One of his favorite things to do as a preschooler was to sit and look in the encyclopedia at all the different varieties of ocean creatures, lizards, and snakes. We purchased a fish tank with all the paraphernalia

that went with it and had our share of pet fish floating belly-up in the tank. After tiring of decomposing gold fish, we made the decision to try turtles and newts. Mike loved the turtles because he could take them out of the tank and let them roam the house with him crawling along beside them.

One time he strategically placed the turtle in the living room when Grandma Barbara was visiting and it came slowly crawling around the end of the couch where she was sitting. Her response was just what he had anticipated! That was the last time he pulled that trick since he knew full well that Grandma was not a lover of turtles nor any other cold-blooded creatures. Her all-time least favorite animals were snakes. This was unfortunate since the kids loved snakes and often caught them in the yard and pasture. Although we eventually let them go, they were often in Kerr jars on our kitchen counter for a day or two so that the family could enjoy them before releasing them into the wild again.

One day someone caught a large garter snake and put it in a glass jar on the kitchen counter. Someone poked holes in the lid of the jar so that the snake wouldn't suffocate and then had gone about their business. Sometime during the night the snake escaped and we discovered an empty bottle in the morning. This was only a minor setback for most of the family but for Grandma and me it was a real problem. Barbara's solution was to quit visiting for several weeks, hoping that we would eventually flush it out but for me it was not so simple. Every closet I opened, every corner I went around I feared that I would come face to face with the missing snake. We finally figured out that it had probably slithered down a heat vent and starved to death in the furnace ducts or was fried alive when winter set in and the furnace turned on. Whatever its fate, we set a new rule that no more snakes were to be

stored in Kerr jars on the kitchen counter. Enough was enough.

Another pet that held our fascination for a short while was the newt. Since we had a fish tank with a lid on it, we assumed that it was safe to store it in the tank which had been carefully prepared with an artificial pond, rocks, dirt, and various objects from the toy box. The newt moved faster than the turtle and so it wasn't advisable for the kids to remove it even though they occasionally did. This wasn't too much of a problem until the newt learned it could remove itself and often did. It became a common occurrence for Mike to announce that the newt was gone again and sure enough, soon we would see it clinging to a wall or scampering across the carpet and we'd all have to be lightening quick on our feet to get it captured and returned to its tank. One time it came up missing and even our best efforts couldn't locate it. We kept thinking that surely we would come across it in the normal course of the day but for several days it eluded us. Finally we found it dead in one of the kids' closets. It was as dry as a bone and stiff as a board and we ceremoniously buried it and determined that there would be no more newts for a while.

Our experiences with a gerbil were no less dramatic and heart-wrenching. He stayed in the back bedroom in the tank with a makeshift cardboard lid since we quit trusting the normal lid (which had been the cause of the newt's demise.) Well, we soon discovered that gerbils like to chew on cardboard and one day he chewed his way to freedom. We hunted and hunted and eventually found him but that little bit of freedom was all it took for him to decide he didn't want to live in a fish tank any more. One day he came up missing and Mike thought that he could hear him in the wall by the downstairs bathroom. He convinced me to put my ear against the wall in the hall and listen for a

little scratching sound. Sure enough, there was a scratching sound. We figured that the gerbil had climbed up between the two by fours in the wood room and had somehow gotten into the wall and was trapped! If I remember the incident clearly I recall that we were very busy that particular day and yet the thought of that little gerbil scratching himself into oblivion in our wall was just too much to bear so when Daddy got home we convinced him to remove the drawer from the vanity which stood against that wall and drill a hole in the wall about two inches in diameter that would allow the gerbil to escape.

As you may quite easily ascertain from the previous accounts of pet problems, Daddy was the “go to guy” whenever we needed a pet “taken out” or helped. Well, like the good sport he was, Daddy got his tools and carefully cut a hole in the wall down low where we could hear the scratching. I don’t know what we expected but no crazed gerbil came spilling out the minute Dad broke through and so we were a little puzzled at that. We decided to just trust that he would be smart enough to know we had prepared a way for his escape and eventually get out but if he did, we didn’t ever see it. That was the last of the gerbil except for a small trace of him that I found years later while cleaning out the storage room. Tucked in my fabric box was what looked like a little nest and in the nest was some fur that looked just like the missing gerbil.

Of course something that no one else worried about but me was just what *was* in the wall scratching and would some other creature now invade our home? No one ever asked about it and of course, I wasn’t going to mention it either.

Perhaps our all-time favorite pet was Muffin. She was a gift from heaven (we found her advertized in the want-ads) and was mature (no



more puppies messing in the garage and carrying off shoes) and well trained. She didn’t chase cars, was gentle and kind, could take a lot of abuse from kids, didn’t kill chickens, and didn’t go roaming at night. She was a mid-size

dog who didn’t mess on the lawn, didn’t wake the neighbors with her barking, and was an all-around great companion for the kids. If she did have a flaw it was that she had long shaggy hair and she looked a little unkempt at times. Since the budget was tight during those years, having her groomed by a professional was definitely not a possibility so each spring I would take the scissors to her long mangy hair and for a few weeks after that she looked like a skinned rabbit. The first time I attempted to give her a cut I soon discovered that the skin under the hair was very loose and that my biggest challenge was cutting the hair without nipping her skin. But, Muffin was patient with me and she put up with the annual shearing to get some relief from the upcoming summer heat.

One time Muffin seemed to be having a problem with her feet and I checked them and discovered that her claws had grown in a circle and were curling back into the pads of her paws. I can’t imagine how uncomfortable this must have been for her. I was able to cut her claws off rather short but I had to use a pair of pliers to remove the claws from the pads and that was tricky. The kids stayed right with me, encouraging and comforting Muffin until the deed was done. From then on we tried to keep an eye on that problem and not let it develop again.

Muffin was truly an amazing dog and so it should come as no surprise that one day she learned to talk. At least that is what the kids claim. One day as we were getting into the car Muffin

perked up and said, "Hi, Mike!" Mike could hardly believe it. I suspected it was just Muffin yawning and giving a dog-style sigh but Mike swears that he spoke to him. Another time he yawned and said, "How are you?" Of course, what can you expect from a pet that has



been a part of the family for so many years? Although we don't mention these experiences to most people, to this day the younger kids stick with their claim that on occasion, Muffin would talk!

After being a dear pet for many years, one day Muffin just disappeared. The kids kept calling to her and walked up and down the canal banks looking for her. They checked the road in from of our place and the pasture and asked around to several of the neighbors but no one had seen her and she never came home again. This was definitely preferable to Steve having to put her out of her misery but it was still hard to have her gone. Because she still remains our all-time-favorite pet I have asked myself over the years, "Can dogs be translated?" Just a thought.

When SaraKay came along and got a little older she started asking for a pet. Steve and I could hardly stand the thought of going through raising another little puppy so we kept putting her off. One time, when Mike was getting ready to get married, he asked if SaraKay wanted his pet boa constrictor but we felt like that was the last thing we wanted and refused to even consider it. Then an opportunity came up for



SaraKay to get a rabbit. We constructed a cage and put it in the pasture and got some feed for her. SaraKay would take her out of her pen and play with her.

We thought that it might be fun to have some baby bunnies and so we

acquired another rabbit, a male, and soon we had a nest full of mousie-looking, hairless babies. What a disappointment the next day to find them all dead, with suspicious looking bite marks all over them. Not to be discouraged by this initial failure, we hoped for another litter and soon could tell that the female was pregnant again. We awaited the arrival of more baby bunnies eagerly only to have the same misfortune befall the second litter. It was so heartbreaking and we didn't know enough about rabbits to know why this was happening but we knew we couldn't stand to have another tragedy on our hands so one afternoon we drove to the Moreland Park and released the rabbits into the wild.

We had a couple of experiences with wild animals that I think are worth mentioning. When we lived in the blue house on Allan's farm we had a bat in the garage. We didn't see it very

much but occasionally when we would arrive home late at night it would be flying around. This didn't give us much concern until it decided to join us in the house. We were entertaining guests in the living room one evening and one of the kids went into the garage and left the back kitchen door open. None of us thought much about it

until all at once this black thing came swooping through the house with the kids close behind, yelling and waving their arms. Of course, this excited the bat and it was swooping here and swooping there. Our guests were totally surprised and thought that a stray bird had found its way in but when we told them it was a bat, everyone panicked.

It was quite obvious to me that there was no way all of us running around waving and screaming were going to solve the problem and so I grabbed a broom and chased the bat until I swatted it a good one and knocked it out cold. We hurriedly put it into a glass jar before it came to its senses, poked holes in the lid for ventilation, and kept it for several days for observation. I don't remember what we eventually did with it but I don't remember ever having to deal with it again.

Speaking of bats, one of the fun things the boys would do each June was to fish for bats. During the early summer months huge June bugs would surface from the lawn. They were quite large and the bats that would come out at night loved to eat them. Our kids and some of the neighbor boys would attach a June bug to the end of a fishing line and then would take the fishing pole and swing the line out into the night. The bats would swoop in, trying to snatch the bugs from the line, and occasionally getting a hook along with the tasty meal.

One encounter with some cats needs mentioning. Before we got automatic garage door openers we would leave our garage doors open most of the time. This created some problems with stray cats in the area because they would come into the garage at night for warmth or a cozy place to sleep. I knew that with my allergies that soon the whole garage would smell like cat and I would be in a fix. We decided to call animal control and ask them to bring us some cages that we could set in the

garage. They agreed and said that if and when we caught something, just to notify them and they would come take the cage and cat away. Wala! Sounded good to us especially since we had recently learned that anyone who shoots animals could be turned in to the government for cruelty to animals.

Well, the first night we set the trap we caught a large calico cat. I called animal control and they did as they had promised and soon arrived to get the pest. Another night, another cat, and we were elated to know that soon our cat problems would be over. We set the cage another night and when we checked it the next morning, to our horror, instead of a cat we had a caged skunk! The kids were totally ecstatic to think we had a skunk in the cage but I could envision it spraying and us not having the use of the garage for a year or two! Of course, the kids had to call all the neighborhood kids and before they left for school on the bus they were peeking around the corner of the garage to see the captive but hopefully not alarm him (or her). My only hope was that since the cage was quite tight quarters for the skunk, I suspected that it may not be able to lift its tail and spray but I didn't know enough about it to be sure.

The minute the county offices were open I made a phone call and asked for animal control. They informed me that the officer was on a week-long vacation and wouldn't be able to service my trap. I pleaded my case and they agreed to send someone else out to help us. Soon a Hispanic fellow, who was as intimidated with the situation as I was, arrived at my door. He had a long pole and from the kitchen door he surveyed the garage and position of the trap. He asked if I had a coat hanger and he fashioned a hook to the end of his pole. Then he quietly lied on the steps by the kitchen and maneuvered the hook until he secured it on the trap door. Very carefully he lifted the door without upsetting the skunk.

Success! The crazy thing about the whole situation was even after the trap door was lifted the skunk was in no hurry to leave and spent most of the day in the cage. Fortunately for me, he finally sauntered out of the cage, the garage, and our life before the kids arrived home from school that afternoon. As one might guess, that was the last time we set cat traps!



beautiful baby and given to know that I had a choice if I would accept it into our family. At first I was hesitant because of how difficult my pregnancies were but looking upon it I realized that most certainly I would be honored to be the mother of such a child. Immediately after making that decision, another baby was brought forward and I realized that there was another child being offered to me. At first I resisted,

but looking on this second baby I was filled with such an awareness of it's goodness that I accepted it, too. When I awoke I had two strong impressions: that there were two more children to come into our family and that they were choice spirits.

When I got pregnant a few weeks later I suspected that I was going to have twins but there was just one and that was Tim. I felt fairly certain that there was another to come but although I wasn't taking any precautions, I didn't get pregnant again for almost eight years. When I got pregnant, I miscarried and my doctor counseled me to take measures to prevent another pregnancy since I was 43 and the risk of birth defects increased with the mother's age. Since Dr. Petersen was LDS I knew that he would understand and so I told him that years before I had seen in a dream two babies and I had only had one and felt that I didn't want to close the door on the possibility that there was another child that was to come to our family. He understood and honored my feelings. Within a couple of months I was pregnant again and carried the baby (SaraKay) to full term. This account creates a lot of questions that I have wondered about over the years but don't have

MIRACLES

I guess every family has miracles but I know that we have had more than our share. I was raised by a mother who believed in the power of prayer. In fact, at her funeral, several of the speakers mentioned that Grandma Ilene had a direct line to heaven and that if any of the children and grandchildren needed something badly, they would call Grandma Ilene and request her faith and prayers in their behalf.

Being raised by such a faithful mother had its effect on me and from my earliest years I had learned to take my concerns and needs to the Lord. In fact, if there was any reason that I had a testimony of God being a reality; it was because I had seen so many distinct and undeniable answers to prayer. I want to mention just a few of them here.

I have always felt that one of the most significant decisions we will ever make in this life has to do with having our children. As I was going through my childbearing years I hoped that I would be able to have the family that the Lord wanted me to have. I have already mentioned a dream I had before I got pregnant with Paul. I had another dream before I got pregnant with Tim. I had been praying that I would know if my family was complete. One night in a dream I was shown a



answers for. I do know that it was such a strong experience that I recorded it in my journal the next day.

Another miracle happened in regards to our involvement in the missionary work with the area Hispanics. As we had these men in our home for missionary lessons, we felt of their goodness and also became acquainted with their home situations and families back in Mexico. Many of them especially enjoyed the interaction with our children and it helped fill the void in their lives since many of them were fathers who had left family behind to come and work in the States.

One day we decided that we should have some sort of special dinner on Easter Sunday and invite them to join us for the occasion. As we thought about what to do to make the holiday special, we decided to play Easter bunny and so we got some baskets and candy and made one up for each of them. The only problem with this was that my budget was tight and buying the extra stuff had left me with very little for groceries. I felt strongly that the Lord was aware of our righteous desires and that he would help us have what we needed.

A few days before Easter I received a phone call from the owner of a furniture store in Blackfoot.

He was calling to see if perchance I had saved any carpet from the time when they carpeted our home. He had a customer who had purchased the same carpet as we had but they were short a few yards and wondered if we had any. I was happy to report that we still had a piece of it rolled up in our storage room and he came and got it and paid us for it and that gave us the money to finish our Easter preparations.

[November, 1988: Mom] *We have had a few interesting miracles around here that I would like to share. Mike had taken part of his savings and bought two lizards. He had planned for this purchase for a long time and had fixed his aquarium up for them. A couple weeks after getting them, one disappeared. We figured it must have squeezed out along a slit in the lid. Michael felt so badly and we decided to make it a matter of prayer. Over a week passed and most of us had given up. Then one day Mike walked into his bedroom and there was his lizard running up and down the curtain. With some effort he soon had it back in its home. We reminded him of our prayers and he replied that he wasn't sure if the Lord had really helped or not.*

One time during harvest we had had an especially windy day and Mike's glasses were so dirty that he couldn't see to work. Finally we decided that he should take them off and work

without them for a while. (Any prolonged period without them would give him a headache). Mike took them off and placed them on a ledge on the equipment just above his head. A while later, when we were through for the day, he went to retrieve them and they were gone. When he mentioned it to the rest of us we realized that the vibration of the belt on the sorter had probably caused them to fall off the ledge and onto the belt below without anyone noticing it. We were just sick about it and started to hunt for them in the rock pile where the extra rocks and dirt were dumped. Usually the “tare” would go on a conveyor belt into the bed of a dump truck but because the hour was late and the dump truck was full, the tare had been going off of the conveyor belt onto a pile on the ground. It was late and dark and despite our efforts, we couldn’t locate the glasses. I knew that we had insurance that helped pay for eye wear and so we went home that night disappointed that we hadn’t been able to locate them but feeling good knowing that our insurance would help us replace them.

Upon arriving home Daddy told us that our insurance would only cover one pair every two years and that loss wasn’t covered. We were all so sorry and went to bed that night with heavy hearts. The next morning as the kids got ready to go to work Becky suggested that we have prayer and ask the Lord to help us find the missing spectacles. We did as she suggested and the kids left soon after for the farm. When they

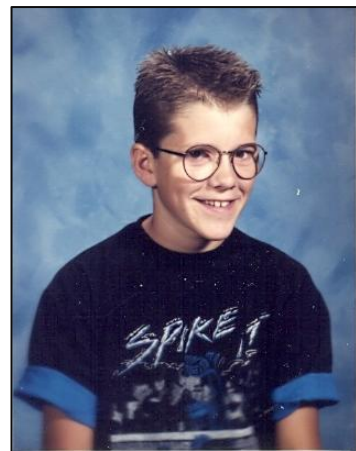


arrived they noticed that Ignacio was using the front-end loader to scoop up the tare from the previous night’s work and then dump it into the truck for transport to the field. When they ran over

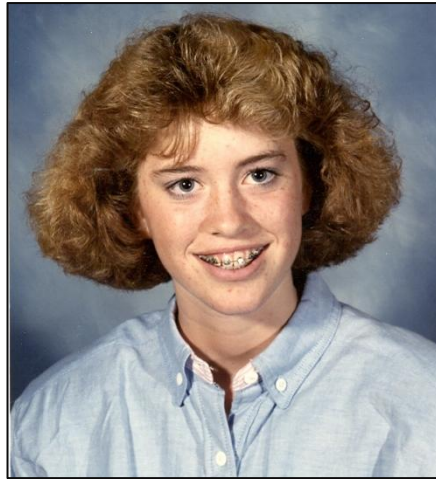
to the tare pile to hunt for Mike’s glasses, there perched right on top of a small pile of rocks, vines, and dirt (about ready to be scooped into the dump truck) were Mike’s glasses! He quickly picked them up, put them on, and announced that they didn’t even have a single scratch on them! It was truly miraculous and to this day is heralded as one of the great witnesses of the Lord’s watch care over us!

The following account was recorded by John that describes a miracle in his life. *Dad is a worthy priesthood holder. When I was six I had 30-40 warts all over my hands. We had tried various methods to get rid of them, but to no avail. Knowing that my father held the priesthood, though, I simply requested that he give me a blessing and I knew that they would then go away. Having the faith of a child, the faith of my parents, and the power of God, the warts disappeared within about a month of when I received the blessing. I still go to dad for blessings regularly. Whenever I have been injured or sick, he has administered to me. Whenever I have been ready for an advancement in the priesthood, he has ordained me. Whenever I have been faced with a large decision or a great deal of pressure, he has been there to lay his hands on me.*

Another miracle occurred when Becky was having surgery on her mouth. She had been in braces for some time but wasn’t able to have the procedure completed because her large incisor teeth wouldn’t emerge. Finally it was decided that she would have surgery done to help the teeth come down into



place. We scheduled her for this with a surgeon in Idaho Falls and I took her to the appointment. As we arrived at the clinic, Becky commented that she was very worried about the procedure. I hadn't realized that she was so frightened and regretted that we hadn't asked her Dad for a blessing before we left that morning. We had prayer before she went in and prayed that she would be calm and that all would go well.



said that the minute she heard the music, she knew the Lord was giving her a sign of his love and reassuring her that all would be well.

Another miracle involved Steve. It was two days before Christmas and Steve and I needed to finish up our shopping. We parked in the parking lot of the big Fred Meyer store and he headed one way

and I headed into another store, with an agreement that we would meet back at the car in an hour. It had been a snowy winter and the parking lot was snow packed and slick. Just

Later, after the surgery, Becky related how her prayers had been answered. She said that as she got into the dentist's chair, she felt all the fear welling up inside of her.

The assistant asked her if she would like to listen to some music while the doctor worked on her. She agreed and the nurse brought her the headphones. The minute the music began, she recognized the song. It was Claire de Lune! Now this



may not have been miraculous to any other patient, but to Becky it was an answer to prayer. She had been practicing that song for several months in preparation for an upcoming festival and it had become one of her favorite pieces. Now as she listened to the beautiful strains, in her mind's eye she could see the passages and remember her fingering and other details of the piece and her mind was distracted and she was able to relax. Soon the surgery was over and we left for home. As Becky related the story to us, she

before getting to the store, for some reason, I turned and looked over towards the Fred Meyer store and saw the profile of Steve lying on the ground. People were running towards him from all around and someone had gone in to use the phone and get an ambulance. Others were standing watch over him, making sure that a car didn't run over him since he

was lying right out in the parking lot and since it was dark, it would have been almost impossible to see him. Daddy, in his cowboy boots, had lost his footing on the ice, slipped, hit his head, and



was out cold! By the time I got to him there was a large crowd of people surrounding him and I had to push my way into the circle of people, telling them that I was his wife. I knelt on the ice and put his head into my lap to get it up off the cold ground (a foolish thing to do in retrospect, especially if his neck had been broken). Soon

the ambulance arrived and he was whisked off to the hospital with me trying to follow in my car. It was a terrifying situation.

When we arrived at the hospital, I called Barbara and Allan and they arrived a while later. By this time Steve was conscious but all he would say was, "Where am I?" "What happened?" He said this over and over and I began to wonder if he was brain damaged. When Allan arrived he gave Steve a blessing and promised him that he would fully recover and be able to continue to provide for his family. That blessing was such a comfort to me throughout the night as we sat at his bedside listening to those two same questions. It was determined after tests were taken that he had a severe concussion but before morning dawned, I was able to bring him home. It was such a relief to have him recover and get his mind and strength back.

As is the case in many accidents, it wasn't until later that I began to think about all the "what ifs", such as "what if I hadn't turned to see him lying on the ground?" "What if I had gone into the store and an hour later waited for him to meet me back at the car and he never did and I didn't know what had happened to him for several hours." "What if he had broken his neck



after taking such a terrific fall and was wheelchair bound!" Well, the list could go on and on but I felt that we had both been spared an even more



traumatic situation by me being prompted to look across the parking lot and by my recognizing that he was on the ground and unconscious.

It may be of interest to note that about five months later when we were preparing our garden spot for planting that Steve got the rototiller out to work the soil. After running the tiller for a while, he came in with a terrific headache and had to lie down for a while. We determined that the vibration of the tiller had aggravated his old concussion and that he was still in the healing process and not completely better yet.

Another time I felt that we had been protected was in regards to an experience Stephani had while on a trip to Mexico with a BYU group. She and her companion were staying with a host family. One day the students were given a free afternoon to shop the markets and then were supposed to return home via the bus lines. The host mother took them to a nearby bus stop and instructed them to get on the same bus to return home later that afternoon.

After shopping, they boarded a bus that they thought would take them to their destination. They were unclear as to how long the ride would be, but as night came on and it got darker and the bus left the city limits, they realized that they must have gotten on the wrong bus. Soon, to their dismay, instead of the bus returning to the

city, it stopped out in the middle of nowhere and the driver told them to get off. Stephani and her companion realized that they were in a very threatening situation...away from home, in a strange place with no one knowing where they were, and without a phone or means of returning to the city.

When they asked the driver to turn the bus around and take them back to the city he said that he was through with his route and that his girlfriend was waiting for him. He asked them if they were afraid and Stephani said that she was not and again requested that he help them. Miraculously, the driver started the bus up, headed back into the city and proceeded to drive them around until at last they found a home that looked familiar to them. (They didn't have a name or address of their host family) It was their professor's host families' home and they disembarked, thanked the driver, and they were reunited with a very concerned host mother. A potentially bad situation had been averted. It wasn't until later, that Stephani realized just how fortunate they were to have been returned safe and sound. She knew that their faith and personal righteousness had sustained and protected them.

Another experience that I had was with Steve (son). Although it was nothing dramatic, it was a sweet reminder to me of Steve's awareness of the Lord's tender mercies. He was assigned to give a talk in sacrament meeting on the topic of prayer and had done considerable research on the topic. One night as I was visiting with him and he was going over the information with me, it struck me that although the materials were good, that he really hadn't given any personal

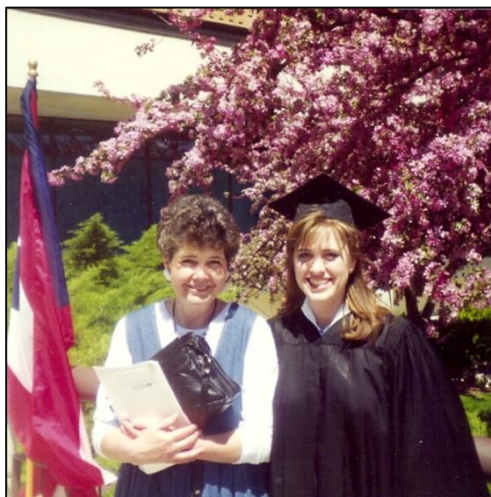


experiences about prayers being answered. I suggested that he try to think of an occasion when his prayers had been answered and then share that experience at the closing of his talk.

Some time later I went down into his bedroom to see if he had completed his preparation and found him still thinking. I was a little surprised that finding a personal experience was so difficult and expressed this to him. His response to me was, "You don't understand, Mom. It's not that I can't think of a time in my life when my prayers were answered. It's that I can't think of a time in my life when my prayers weren't answered! I just don't know which miracle to relate!"

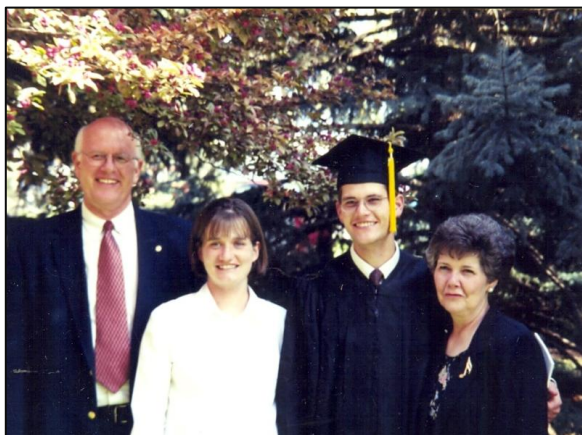
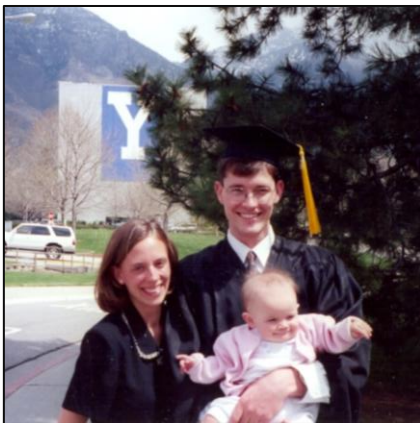
I guess if we are relating miracles we must not forget to mention the miraculous way in which the kids have all had the money they needed to

go to college. One by one each child has found a way to fund their schooling, whether it was with personal savings, a PELL grant, or scholarships. Having so many enrolled in college at the same time qualified our family for government grants which usually paid for their housing for the year, the scholarships paid for tuition, and summer wages helped to make up the



extra. None of the children ever had to borrow money during their time as undergraduate students.

It might be of interest to mention the degrees earned: Stephani got a bachelor's degree in English (BYU), Shauntel earned both a bachelor's and masters degree in Psychology (BYU), Stephen, a bachelor and masters degree in Systems (BYU), David a bachelor degree in Finance (BYU) and a dual master's degree in Hospital Administration/MBA from Arizona State University. Becky earned a bachelor's degree in History (BYU), John earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and then a dual master's degree in engineering/business administration (BYU). Mike earned a bachelor's degree in Zoology and a doctorate in dental science from the University of Iowa. Paul earned a bachelor's degree from BYU in chemical engineering and a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. Tim earned a bachelor's and master's degree in accounting from BYU and passed off his CPA exam the summer following his graduation. SaraKay is attending BYU-I and working on a degree in Music Education. During her senior year in high school she applied for and was awarded over \$10,000 in scholarship aid and has what she needs to get her schooling. We recognize the Lord's tender mercies to us in this area and



know he was aware of our needs.

Another miracle had to do with a vacation that we took in conjunction with Steve's insurance work. The company was having a big convention in California and paid for Steve's travel and meals for the event. The convention also provided

activities for the spouses and families of the agents if they came along. Since we had not taken the family to Disneyland for a long time, we decided that we would make it a family affair and we started saving money for the event. As the time drew nearer for making the trip, we realized that we just didn't have the money to do it.

A couple of weeks before we were to leave Stephani was in an accident in our red Toyota. She had been driving along when a car that was parked by a mailbox, suddenly drove right into the side of our Toyota. Although Stephani was rattled, she wasn't hurt, but the front fender was badly

rumpled. When we contacted the insurance company about the accident, they told us to get some bids for the repair and they would reimburse us. We got the bids and soon had \$500 for the repairs. Since the damage to the

Toyota was only cosmetic, we decided to take the insurance money and use it to help with our vacation instead of getting the fender fixed. A few days later my parents called and offered another \$500 to help us make our vacation plans a reality.

We were so grateful that the way had been opened for us to make this trip and we went and had a wonderful time!

It seemed to me that many of the miracles we have seen as a family dealt with simple everyday problems that some observer might consider trivial. But, I have learned time and time again that no problem is too small or insignificant for the Lord if it is important to one of his children. Such was the situation that developed with Becky when she was preparing to compete in Junior Miss.

The Junior Miss Program was a competition for girls who were high school juniors. They competed in several categories including Poise (evening gown), Academics, Physical Fitness, Talent, and Interview. The winner was selected by a panel of judges. Since it had proven to be a good source of scholarship money for Stephani and Shauntel, Becky wanted to participate in it, also. It was always a gamble whether the prize money that they might win would cover expenses if we got too extravagant so we tried to be conservative in our preparations. Becky bought a formal that she used for her Poise and Appearance presentation, but we had been wrestling with what to use for a costume for her talent number which was a piano piece entitled "Autumn". We didn't want to buy another expensive formal and so we visited with friends and neighbors and mentioned that we were looking for a second formal. Several people offered to let Becky borrow one of theirs and so before we knew it, we had a bedroom full of used prom dresses. Becky would try one on and shake her head, "No", and then try on another one. It was very discouraging and then someone else would bring some dresses to the house and

she would try on the next batch.

As you might imagine, most of these prom dresses were from years past and most were totally out of style and not to Becky's liking. We continued to search for just the right outfit but as the time for the competition drew near, we wondered if we would ever find just the right dress.

One day after school Becky was in the bedroom trying on more dresses and commented, "If I'm going to wear one of these old prom dresses, I might as well wear great-grandma Gooch's dress!" The minute she said it, it was like we looked at each other and knew we had our answer. She should wear her Grandma Abby's dress! We hurried downstairs and pulled it out of the cedar chest where it had been for many years. It was a silky gold fabric with a flair skirt to the floor, puff sleeves with delicate lace around the sleeves and neck, and it had tiny buttons to the waist in the front. It had a wide matching sash. Becky tried it on and we both knew it was the answer to our prayers! We found some old



high top shoes at the local Deseret Industries and Grandma Barbara loaned her a brooch that completed the look.

But, not only was the dress perfect, we discovered that the composer of her piano piece, C. Chaminade, was a contemporary of her great-



grandma Gooch, and was also a woman! This was truly amazing since in those days women weren't supposed to be composers and so she had hidden her identity by simply using the name, C. Chaminade instead of her complete first name. We wrote up a brief description of the dress's origins and the tie in with the composer and Becky had a winning combination. Not only did it wow the crowds at our local program but she went on to win the Idaho state title. When people would ask me how in the world we came up with the idea for her talent presentation, I had to admit that it was straight from heaven!

Our extended family has also had its share of miracles. I would like to include a few.

Although the time in Pakistan was difficult for mother, my sister, Lisa, also had her challenges while they were gone. She had decided to go on a mission and received her call to the Puerto Rico, San Juan Mission. She was struggling with all the things that new missionaries have to deal with including learning a new language and homesickness. It was especially challenging at first because she didn't have an apartment and



she and her companion were living in the local meeting house.

Anyway, she was really struggling and one night she had a dream. In this dream

Grandma Abby Gooch came to her and told her that if she was going to have a successful mission



that she needed to quit writing to all her family and friends and just write to her parents; to quit whining and start working. Grandma told her that if she would do this that she would be able to truly focus on the work and that she would get over her homesickness and discouragement. It worked!

I've always thought that it was very interesting that when my mother was half way around the

world in Pakistan and unable to be of much help to Lisa that the Lord sent Lisa's grandma (who had been dead for many years) to help her and give support. It makes one wonder just how much help we get from the other side of the veil!

When Grandpa and Grandma Richards were called to the Peru, Lima Mission under President Earl, whom they had known while in Moses Lake, they were originally sent to a small, primitive village in the Andes called Tarma. One day they were riding on one of the rickety old buses in that mountainous area when a group of soldiers (native guerrillas) forced the bus to the side of the road and boarded. The minute Dad could see what was happening he recognized that as two, very visible, white Americans on the bus, he and Mother could be in danger. The soldiers were for the most part quite young and bristling with weapons of every kind.

One young soldier sat by Dad and as



they resumed their journey, he and Daddy began to talk; the soldier in rudimentary English and Daddy in rudimentary Spanish. At one point the soldier said, "What's an old man like you doing in the tops of the Andes?" Dad replied, "We are here on a mission of peace." He then did his best to explain about the Church and bear his witness of its truthfulness.



Soon, at the soldiers' command, the bus stopped and they got off. As the young man who had visited with Daddy turned to leave, Daddy had the distinct impression that if things would have been different politically that the young soldier would have accepted the restored gospel. Daddy knew they had been divinely protected but also felt a sadness that conditions were such that this young man probably never would have the opportunity to hear and heed the gospel message.

With Nate and Maureen's permission I would like to include Maureen's account of a miracle that happened to her while in the Salt Lake Temple at the time that our extended family gathered to celebrate Grandpa and Grandma's 50th wedding anniversary. Nate told me that she had written the account and at my request she sent it to me prefaced by this explanation: **[Maureen]** *I wrote this record at my Dad's request. I still remember the night I wrote it. We were visiting Keith and Maggie in their campus apartment while they were still in school in Madison. My parents had come with us to visit the kids and while we were there my Dad insisted I sit down and write about what happened. I sat at the computer and what resulted was almost as much of a miracle as what happened in the temple. I began to type the words and they came to me almost as if someone were dictating them to me. I remember*

that when I finished, I made only a couple of format corrections. I have always felt that it was written as it was for a specific purpose. I don't know that I know what that purpose is, but I do know that it was a very unusual experience the way it came to me.

"Trent was six years old and in the first grade. It was part of our evening ritual to listen to him read and then say prayers and tuck him in for the night! He had just finished reading a story about a big bear and a little mouse who lived in different houses and did very different things during the day, but because they were friends, they would meet each day at 3:00 to eat ice cream together. We finished the story, said prayers, tucked him in, and I was in the process of turning out the light and closing the door when Trent stopped me.

"Mom," he said, "That's a big word, together." He was so proud that he could read a word with that many letters and wanted me to acknowledge his success. I assured him that it was, indeed, a big word.

I couldn't have realized at that moment just how true that statement was. Just days later we lost that precious son in a tragic accident and in the following days his voice kept echoing in my heart, "That's a big word...together."

My testimony of the gospel and “together” were vital as I worked through the grief and pain that his loss left. We worked ever more diligently as a family, conscious on a daily basis to live worthy to someday be reunited as an eternal family together, forever, never again to suffer the pain of separation. Trent became the tangible, personal motivation to live worthy of temple blessings that just days before had seemed more distant and less urgent. Temple covenants that were words our minds understood now became promises our hearts clung to.

The years passed; ten years, two new sons, gifts to ease our pain came. We basked in the joy they brought. Our son and a daughter married in the temple and extended family loved and supported us unceasingly. The stabbing pain of Trent’s death softened, though he was never far from our hearts.

We were at a family reunion in Salt Lake City and enjoying the company of family we had not seen for some time. One of the planned reunion activities was a morning in the temple. All of the adults would do endowments and all of the grandchildren over 12 would do baptisms for the dead. My children were not real excited about that plan. They didn’t think it had the thrill and excitement they expected to share with cousins they hadn’t seen for some time. Somewhat begrudgingly they loaded up the cars with us

before dawn so that we could arrive by 6:00 a.m. We got them started down at the baptistery and then the adults went upstairs to do an endowment session together.

It was a glorious experience to be there in the temple with parents, brothers and sisters, and our newly married children with their spouses. We completed the session and stood in the celestial room basking in the joy of the morning. It was a heavenly experience!

After lingering for some time, not wanting it to end, we finally began slowly walking from the celestial room. Dad and I were walking arm in arm down the hall when one of the temple workers up ahead put out his arm to stop us so that an endowment party coming up the hall could enter the room we were just beginning to pass. As we stood there waiting and watching the people come up the hall, I had the most marvelous experience of my life.

I felt a complete and consuming joy come over me; so powerful and electric that I remember getting weak in the knees and leaning on Dad for strength. I heard no audible voice, but nevertheless, the words, “I’m here, too, Mom.” Again, I couldn’t see with my mortal eyes but my spirit saw in a spiritual sense, our son, Trent, standing on my left side. I knew that his hand was touching my elbow and that he rose above my shoulder and had to lean down to whisper those words in my ear. He wasn’t a six year old boy, but a tall, mature man. And somehow I knew he was happy and that it was important to him that we knew that he had shared this glorious experience that morning with us as a family. It was important that we all knew it was a reunion in the truest sense—a taste of the eternal reunion we are all looking forward to.

I was so filled with joy I couldn’t move or speak for a short time. Dad asked what



was wrong and then, within the sacred walls of that holy place, I shared with him the visit of our son. After we changed clothes and prepared to return to the world, I gathered all of our extended family around there in the temple and bore my testimony to them of the importance of the work we had just done and of the urgency of our living each day to be worthy of these temple blessings in our lives. I told them of Trent's visit and the witness it was to all of us that this was a true work. And then the memory of that night long ago flooded my mind. "Together" is a big word. It is the most important word ever thought or uttered. It is what our life before now and in the eternal hereafter is all about."

[Nate's memories] When Grandpa and Grandma Richards heard of the accident, they soon arrived to offer comfort and strength. Friday morning Nate's stake president, President Morey, visited Trent in the hospital and soon thereafter commented to Nate, "He isn't there, is he?" (Meaning that Trent's spirit had already departed). This statement, though difficult to hear, helped Nate and Maureen accept the reality of Trent's impending death. Friday night Dad and Nate went to the hospital to give Trent a blessing and Dad felt that Nate should be voice for the blessing although Nate doubted that he could do it and keep his emotions in check. When Nate gave the blessing he commanded Trent's spirit to return to his Father in Heaven.

Following this blessing he and Dad left the bedside and went into the hall. Whereas Daddy had been strong and composed prior to this time, now he broke into sobs and Nathan

realized for the first time the depth of not only his own sorrow, but that of his Dad.

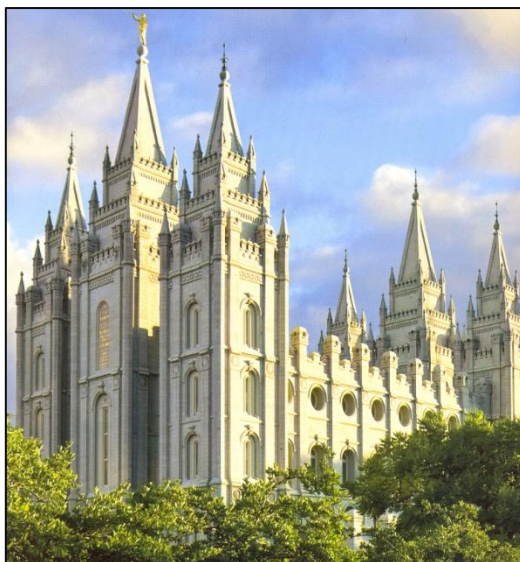
On Sunday morning Nate was sitting in bishopric meeting when he received a phone call from the doctor saying that he felt they should come in since Trent's vital signs showed lowering blood pressure and no indication of any brain activity. He and Maureen soon met at the hospital and stood at the bedside while the life support was removed. Within a few minutes Trent was gone.

Following Trent's death there was a great ground-swell of support for their family. They were overwhelmed at the love and generosity of family, friends, and ward members. There were many tender mercies and experiences that reaffirmed to them of the Lord's love and watch care.

It might be of interest to relate that the day of Trent's accident Maureen was unusually tired. She felt that she was dragging around and just couldn't shake the feelings of weariness.

Looking back she felt like her spirit was aware of the events that would soon unfold and was grieving.

A while after Trent's passing Nate had a dream one night and in the dream Trent came to him. He was full grown but Nathan recognized him immediately. He told Nathan that he needed to accept his (Trent's) death and move on. When Nate told him that he couldn't, Trent explained that he had sent them Tanner to ease the pain. This dream brought a lot of comfort. The interesting thing was that as Tanner grew, in so many little ways he truly was just like Trent. When Nate and Maureen would catch glimpses



of the similarities, it was a sweet reminder of Trent's "gift" to them.

Nate related that following Trent's death, he spent many a night pacing the floor. Trent had thrived on being Nate's little side-kick. Nate had given him a small hammer and Trent often followed him around while they were building their home and he would pound nails everywhere. Every time Nathan would come across one of these nails, it brought back bitter/sweet memories of the times they had shared together.

Many years after this Nate and Maureen moved their family across the country to Connecticut. Nate was a builder and there had been an economic downturn in the Tri-cities area forcing him to look for work elsewhere. He moved to Connecticut and a while later his entire family joined him. They put their Richland home up for sale and rented a house until their own home could sell. Nate built two homes and was in the process of selling them when the market on the east coast collapsed forcing them to return to Richland. Fortunately their home hadn't sold and they were able to return to it. As one can imagine, this time was one of great stress and hardship.

Nate stopped here one night en route to Washington and we were talking about what they were going through financially trying to keep it all together. He said that when he had arrived in Richland with one truckload of equipment and furnishings that the Bishop of the ward had approached him about helping their family until this difficult time had passed. Nate assured the bishop that they were doing all right

and would weather this financial storm the same way that they had done others. He said to the concerned bishop. "Compared to what we went through at the time of Trent's death, this experience is a piece of cake!"

Nate commented that he feels that losing Trent has in the long run been a unifying and strengthening experience for their family. They know how fragile and fleeting life is and how important it is to develop strong relationships. There has been a tradition of love and kindness among the siblings that continues even today although it has been nearly 28 years since Trent died.



Another miracle involved Bradley Cheney, Don and Deniece's son. Brad was born on December 27th of 1988 while they were living in Perrysburg, Ohio. One afternoon, when he was about three weeks old, Deniece fed him and put him down for a nap. The bassinet was in the corner of the family room and Deniece started folding clothes just a short

distance away from the bassinet. In a few minutes she noticed that the bassinet was moving and when she went to check on Brad, she could see that he was having a seizure. She immediately picked him up and ran to phone Don, who was at work. She told him that something was wrong with Brad; he left work and was soon home. While a neighbor lady tended their other young children, Don and Deniece hurried to the hospital that was about a 15-20 minute drive from their home. En route Bradley had another seizure.

When they arrived at the hospital the medical team took Bradley and began running tests to

see what was going on. During this time they waited patiently in a waiting room for news of his condition. Finally the doctors notified Don and Deniece that they could join Bradley in a small bedroom. He was lying in a crib and Deniece asked, "When can I take my baby home?"

The neurosurgeon (without any sensitivity to their feelings) said, "Your baby is going to die. You are never going to take him home. So call your family and let them know." He went on to tell them that Bradley's seizures were a result of a massive stroke that he had suffered. The doctor said that it was only a matter of time before another stroke would take him.

So began a vigil at his bedside. Deniece stayed right in the hospital with Bradley who had been transferred to a "terminal illness" wing of the facility. She stayed with him for a week but there were no more seizures. The doctors put Bradley on some medication that slowed down all of his body processes and made him very lethargic. She and Don both had reservations about the quality of life he would have if he was always sedated like that.

Finally after being hospitalized for a week with no indications that his condition was deteriorating, they made the decision to take him off of the medications and to take him home and let him be a part of the family. The doctors vehemently objected but after consulting a lawyer and signing forms that would release the doctors of any liability if he died, they took Brad home. The neurosurgeon, who was upset with this decision, reminded them again that any time Bradley cried hard or exerted himself,



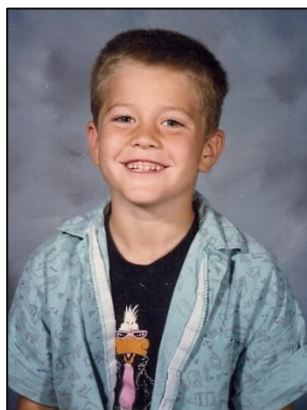
he could develop an aneurism and be gone.

Taking him home truly was an act of faith on Don and Deniece's part. Deniece said that the reality that they could lose him at any time was never far from her mind. But, as the weeks and months passed and he continued to grow and flourish, they knew they had made the right decision.

When the medical team that had attended Bradley realized that he was doing well, they approached Don and Deniece about letting them run further tests on him since his condition was a very rare one and his survival was truly miraculous. Don and Deniece declined this request and continued to let Bradley grow and experience life as a normal little boy. They both knew that Bradley's life was a miracle and that although the Lord could call him home, they had peace about the situation and had truly put Bradley into the Lord's hands.

As the years passed, Bradley had a couple of seizures but they were slight and the effects minimal. One time he came to breakfast and said, "My body's not working." They could see that the muscles in half of his face were sagging and they realized that sometime in the night he had suffered a stroke. With a little time he regained his muscle tone and he was able to carry on and live a completely normal life.

As of this writing, Bradley has just completed an honorable mission for the Church in the Philippines and is presently a student at BYU-Idaho, working part-time and enjoying an active social life. Our extended



family still considers him our “miracle” baby!

ILLNESSES AND ACCIDENTS

No family history is complete without mentioning accidents and medical problems. We, too, had our share of cut lips (John), bumped heads (Paul), fingers caught in the car door (Becky) and other such childhood maladies. Although we owned a trampoline and the kids spent hundreds of hours on it, we were fortunate to never have a broken bone or other injury as a result of this activity. It was, though, a source of consternation on one occasion involving Tim.

One frosty winter morning while waiting for the bus, the children were jumping on the trampoline. Someone mentioned that the frost on the frame of the trampoline looked like delicious ice cream and Tim decided to lick it. When his warm tongue came in contact with the ice cold metal, it stuck fast. The bus was seen down the road but fortunately one of the kids ran inside informing me that Tim was stuck to the trampoline and couldn't pull himself loose without tearing the skin off of his tongue. I grabbed a pan of warm water, ran outside, poured it over the stuck tongue, and Tim escaped in time to catch the bus! Thank goodness one of the kids let me know Tim was in distress or he may have spent the day attached to the trampoline!

On one occasion Steve (son) kept having problems with one of his big toenails. He couldn't seem to keep it from becoming infected. Finally I took him to the doctor and he decided that he would slit the nail down the middle to get the nail to lay better. After deadening it, he started cutting and noticed something unusual. Growing under the nail was a large white, mushroom-shaped tumor. As it had grown, it



had pushed up on the nail, causing the sides of the nail to dig into the skin and fester. Dr. Haddock knew it wasn't something he was qualified to handle so he sent us to a specialist

who removed the tumor and then destroyed most of the nail bed. We told Steve not to worry about his toe looking a little odd; just to be sure that when he went a'courting he kept his shoe on.

When we lived on the desert, riding the school bus each day was one of the kids's favorite things. Their bus driver, Jenny,

was like a second mother to them since they spent so much time each day with her on the bus and the other neighborhood kids were also an important part of their lives. They usually got on the bus about 7:30 a.m. and returned home about 4:30. Following is an account written when Becky was run over by the school bus.

[February 26, 1980: Mom's Journal] Becky nearly lost her life a few weeks ago. She was delayed in getting off the bus and the driver didn't see her cross in front



of the bus, started to go, knocked Becky down with the bus and Becky, seeing she wasn't going to make it clear of the bus, rolled up in a little ball while the bus passed over her. One foot was run over by the front tire but Becky pulled her legs in close so that the back tires wouldn't get it again. She had a cut on the side of her head where the bumper hit her.



The other children were nearly to the house, not witnessing the accident when one of them heard her yelling, turned and saw her curled up and bleeding in the middle of the road. They rushed to get me and I ran out and carried her in and it wasn't until she described what happened that we realized how close we came to not having her at all. We took her to the hospital and after extensive x-rays and some stitches, we returned home to seven other children and held a sweet and special home evening. For several days following the accident my nerves and emotions were rather shaky but oh, how grateful we are to have everyone safe! Incidents like that make you put other things in proper perspective.

We learned later that Jenny felt a slight bump when she hit Becky and Ted (who was standing at the front of the bus visiting with Jenny) said to her, "Hey, did you hit a kid?" They both looked back but only saw what they thought was a coat in the middle of the road and so they kept going to finish the bus route. I was alright until hours later when I began thinking about all the "what ifs". What if she had gotten her hair caught in the drive line under the bus, what if she had gotten dragged to death, and on and on..... It haunted me for weeks.

John had a number of accidents including some

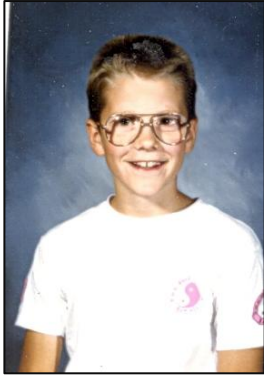
burns he received from floating the Snake River with a friend. He was lying on his stomach on an inner tube with the back of his legs exposed to the sun for several hours. By the time he got home his legs were bright red and blistered. It was a couple of days before he was able to walk and the burn behind his knees bothered him for weeks.

Another time John went sledding with the ward scout troop and their sled went over a small cliff, dumping all the boys in a heap. John landed on an exposed rock and hurt his knee so his leader told him to sit by the fire and keep warm until he felt better. Well, he didn't get feeling much better and when Steve picked him up at the church after the activity, he could hardly walk. When he got out of the car, blood poured out from the leg of his snow pants. It nearly filled his boot. He had not only hit his knee but had sliced it open and was bleeding profusely. Because of all the thick padding in his snow pants, the blood hadn't been visible until it had nearly saturated them. It was such a bad injury that he had to have surgery on his knee and was laid up for quite a while. We were grateful that he hadn't sat by the fire trying to keep warm and bled to death.

[May, 1985: Mom] *Another time John was at a Little League practice when he was hit in the mouth with a fast ball. It split his lip clear through and he hurried home, bleeding profusely. The doctor ended up putting about 15 stitches inside and out to sew him together. He has had his share of injuries!*



As far as I can remember, Stephani, Mike, and Paul were the only ones to have



broken bones. Stephani broke her arm when she fell off the top bunk bed when she was about three years old. Mike broke his arm while he was playing flag football during recess and he just happened to end up on the bottom of a very

large "dog pile". When I was notified that he was hurt I made a hasty trip to the Riverside School to get him. When I got to the school he was lying in the sick room with a little blanket over him. He was almost as white as a sheet and looked so small and frail. After x-rays it was determined that he had broken both bones a little above the wrist. *(Steve's comment: He was sure brave in the hospital as they x-rayed his arm and bent things back into place. Just a few days later he was back to playing football again..... until his mother found out.)*

When Mike was a new deacon he attended an activity at the Cox's. He was playing on some cross bars and fell, hitting his chin and biting his tongue. He was bleeding profusely so I called the hospital emergency room. The nurse said that even small cuts of the tongue bleed badly and that it was probably nothing to worry about. I knew better. We took him in and upon examination they discovered that he had nearly bitten his tongue off. It required several stitches and the next morning Mike's tongue had swollen so much that he could hardly talk. I was worried that it was going to swell so much that it would cut off his breathing, too. We were leaving two days later for Stephani's wedding in Salt Lake City and I really debated whether we dared leave him home while we went to Utah but fortunately he improved rapidly and soon healed.

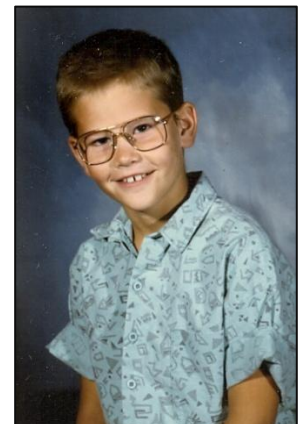
Paul broke his hand during an intramural floor hockey game during his fifth or sixth grade year.

He was the goalie and someone was doing a penalty shot. Paul was defending and when he blocked the shot, everyone on the opposing team joined the fray and Paul's hand got hit by multiple hockey sticks. This injury put him out of commission for the rest of the season and also seriously curtailed his involvement in most other sports (and piano practicing) for several weeks. When Mike realized that Paul would be unable to practice the piano, he bemoaned the fact that he wasn't lucky enough to have his hand broken!

Paul fell against the wood burning stove and hit one of his front teeth so hard that a big chip broke off of it. The dentist was able to repair the chip but within a short time the tooth started turning brown and we realized that it had been badly damaged. Another time Paul cut a gash in his forehead and we took him in for stitches. He was such a sweet little boy that he just lied very quietly while they stitched him up.

In 1980 Steve's mother, Barbara was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was scheduled immediately for a partial mastectomy and following the surgery the doctors felt that they had been able to get it all. But, because there is always a chance of the cancer spreading, they recommended that she take both radiation and chemotherapy treatments. Although chemo can be gut-wrenching for some patients, Barbara got along quite well and didn't have too much nausea.

[September, 1984:
Allan] *Barbara had another treatment yesterday. She has been on chemo for almost three years. Dr. Ratcliff said to her, "You may be one of those lucky ones that we brag about." It is tough on her to go*



through that routine every two weeks, but we all need to thank the Lord as well as Dr. Ratcliff. Barbara's attitude alone is enough to assure success.

She was pronounced cancer-free after the cancer did not reoccur for the ensuing five years. Although she had been given a clean bill of health, she once told me that every time she would get an ache or pain, she'd fear that the cancer had returned. Just a little over five years after her first surgery, it was discovered that she had cancer in her thyroid. Again she endured the radiation and chemo treatments. They took a heavier toll on her this time although she was never one to complain or draw attention to herself.

It was shortly after this second occurrence that Steve and I were attending a missionary zone conference in Idaho Falls. Hugh Pinnock was the visiting General Authority and had been the speaker in both the morning and afternoon sessions



of the conference. Following the afternoon session, President Carmack invited us to join him and his wife, Shirley, and President Pinnock and his wife, Ann, for dinner at a nearby restaurant. When we got into the car, I was in the back seat with Shirley and Ann and I mentioned that Steve's mother was fighting cancer. Sister Pinnock turned to me and said, "Susan, you need to have my husband administer to Barbara. He has the gift of healing!" She then proceeded to tell me of several instances when Elder Pinnock had healed people from various maladies, including a little boy who was blind.

We immediately called Barbara and told her of Elder Pinnock's desire to give her a blessing. She

had not been planning to attend the evening session but got ready and came with Allan who was at the time the Regional Representative for the area. Following the evening session, Elder Pinnock administered to her. He told her that she should not be fearful, that the Lord was aware of her and would watch over her. It was a beautiful and comforting blessing.

Again Barbara beat the odds and enjoyed several more years of good health. Then in 1988 the cancer reoccurred. This time it had spread to her lungs. She and Allan did all they could to arrest it, even considering making a trip to Greece where they were experimenting with a new drug that had shown promise. She again underwent

chemo and this time within a week she began losing her hair. She had always had such beautiful hair and she commented that she had never known how traumatic it was to go bald.

One Friday morning I heard a knock at the back door and it was

Barbara. I looked at the clock on the oven because Barbara always had her hair appointment at Jan's Silver Scissors at 11:00 on Friday morning. It was just barely 11:00 and I commented to her that she must have moved her appointment up an hour. She stood there in the kitchen for a minute and then she said, "Can you tell?" I was sitting at the dining room table folding clothes and I looked at her and couldn't imagine what she was asking. Then she said, "I'm wearing a wig." It was so lifelike that I really had not been able to tell. She said that was the sweetest thing I could have done was to mistakenly think that she had been to Jan's and gotten her hair done like she normally would do.

Barbara wore her wig during that last session of chemo and continued to look beautiful. Sometimes she would wear a turban-style scarf that was also attractive. I still remember the morning that Becky was getting ready to leave for Moscow, Idaho to compete in the Idaho Jr. Miss Program. Just before we left to drop her off at the airport, Barbara came to say good-bye. She was wearing her turban and looked tired and pale. She told Becky that she had a feeling that she would do very well at the state program and gave her a hug and kiss. No matter how badly Barbara was feeling, she seemed to be able to put it aside and carry on as a wonderful friend and grandmother.

When the treatments were over, her hair gradually grew back in which was a huge relief to her. But, the cancer wasn't to be denied and eventually it took her life. She died in March of '90. I have always thought that she purposely died at a time of the year that Allan wouldn't be heavily involved with spring planting or the hectic time of the fall harvest. She was like that.....so thoughtful and good.

I would like to include part of a blessing that Barbara received as a young woman from Alma B. Larsen and which she quoted in one of her monthly family letters: *"Barbara, I bless you that in marriage you shall find divine happiness; that he who shall become your helpmate may ever be kind and tender and considerate of you; that your*

home may become a sanctuary in which the Holy Spirit shall ever be the guiding influence and where love and good will and confidence shall ever



prevail, and the power of the priesthood may rest upon your household. Yea, even to the extent that the angel of death shall have respect unto its powers and when doctors and physicians shall have failed, the sick shall be restored and life prolonged that your heart may rejoice because of faithfulness."

In that same letter Barbara commented, *"That is such a beautiful, comforting promise and I certainly treasure it immeasurably. I want to say, too, that your father has been so kind and considerate and helpful to me during the past month. He is surely a strength and comfort when I need it. I appreciate it and love him very much, as I do each of you."*

Although it couldn't be classified as either an accident or illness, we did have a disability that ran in our "genes" and manifested itself numerous times. We noticed it in Becky first. Her eyes focused separately although she had perfect eye sight. Steve and I had noticed it shortly after she was about a year old and I took her to a specialist who verified that my prognosis was right. He recommended putting her in glasses that would encourage her eyes to move in tandem. He said that sometimes this would work and sometimes it wouldn't but that before we took more extreme measures, the glasses were our best choice.

Becky was 18 months old when she was fitted for glasses and she loved them and wore them with pride. After several months, though, it was determined that the glasses weren't working and that she would need surgery. Following her surgery, the



whites of her eyes were a bright red, just like in a photo that has “red eye” problems. She looked like a little demon and we got a lot of stares from ward members at church the following Sunday. This discoloration lasted about two weeks and then she was fine.

When Mike and Paul came along I noticed the same problem with their eyes. After an examination the doctor prescribed glasses for them. Fortunately this procedure worked and if they were faithful wearing their glasses, their eyes would function properly. Over time I noticed that the only times their eyes would cross was when they got tired at night. They were both so good about wearing their glasses.

Mike was so little when he went in for his first exam that he wasn’t talking yet and I wasn’t sure if he could respond to the doctor’s prompts. I still remember him standing, looking at the eye chart and pointing his hand to let the doctor know what he was seeing. When he got his first pair of glasses he was overjoyed but those poor glasses really got a work out considering the lifestyle of an active three-year-old boy!

Paul’s eyes weren’t diagnosed until he was in third or fourth grade but he too was able to be helped with glasses and so he wore them up through the



grades and was grateful for the help they were to him. Sometimes with his active life style his glasses got so beat up that Steve regularly bent them back into shape.

On May 8, 1982 my sister Deniece’s husband, Don, was checking sprinkler pivots on his farm in Declo, Idaho when he had a serious accident. One pivot failed to start and Don drove to the

electrical panel which controlled the pivot to see if he could identify what was wrong. Upon opening the panel he immediately recognized that two wires were situated so that the circuit was not complete and Don instinctively reached with his gloved hand to tap the wire and complete the circuit. When his gloved hand touched the wires with a metal pair of pliers, the circuit jumped into his body and he remembers a huge flash of light. He was thrown about 100

feet from the electrical panel, landing on his back. (Later doctors told him that this jolt to his system probably saved his life; that his heart stopped beating when the electricity coursed through his body but that landing jolted his heart back to life.)

When he came to, he thought for a moment that he was blind because everything was totally black. He could smell burning skin and upon touching his glasses he realized that the metal frames were

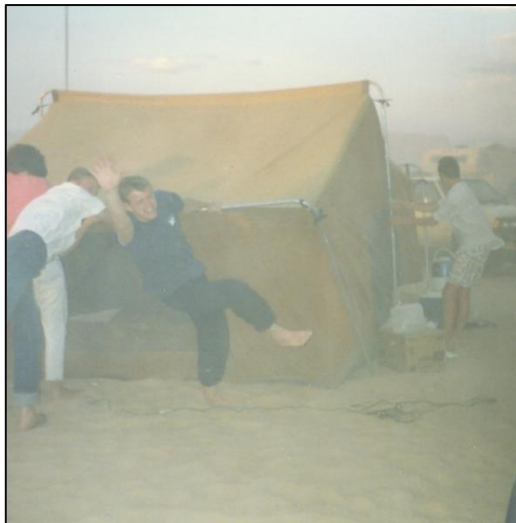


melted and charred. The new CarHeart jacket that he was wearing had the sleeve blown off in the explosion and with it much of the skin on his arm and hand.

He knew he had to get help and he slowly made his way to the pickup. Because his glasses were blackened he remembered looking up out of the tops of them and seeing the line of telephone poles and realizing that he had to drive along those poles to get back home for help.

A neighbor saw Don's pickup coming out of the field and noticed how it was swerving all over and recognized that Don was in trouble. He ran up to the pickup and seeing Don he quickly took him to a nearby horse trough and stuck Don's head in the water to help stop the burn damage. He called to his wife who went for Deniece. He wrapped Don's head in a wet towel and had him sit with his head out the pickup window all the way to the emergency room.

Don was treated by the doctor's at the Burley hospital but it was determined that his burns were bad enough that he needed to be in the burn center at the University Hospital in Salt Lake City. Thus began a long and tortuous experience of recovery from the 2nd and 3rd degree burns on his body. Thankfully, after much treatment and pain, Don was able to return home and resume his normal activities. He felt very blessed that he didn't sustain permanent scarring to his face and neck and that his life was preserved.



FAMILY REUNIONS

Both the Richards and the Larsens held a reunion every other year and these became events that helped our families grow closer and keep in touch. It was especially meaningful to the cousins who formed close relationships through these get-togethers.

In the early years Barbara and Allan designated the

sites for the reunion and usually paid the lion's share of the expenses for the facilities. In July of '81 they reserved a camp near Tetonina that was owned and operated by Ricks College called "Badger

Creek." There were all kinds of activities available and we went canoeing, rappelling,

horseback riding, hiking, and held campfire programs.



It was during the canoeing activity that we nearly had a fatal accident. Prior to boarding the canoes Steve and I decided that it would be good

if he could be in the same boat as our children in case of any problems. If I remember correctly, I stayed behind with the smaller children during the activity. Although the stream that they were floating was slow moving and not too deep, part way through the trip Steve's canoe capsized. Of course, everyone was



wearing life jackets so it wasn't a matter of grave concern when it tipped over. But, after the kids came bobbing back to the surface, Steve realized that David was not there. He quickly checked and found that David had somehow gotten wedged beneath a willow bush along the side of the stream and that the branches were keeping him from surfacing. Fortunately, Steve was able to reach into the roots of the willow tree and free David or he would have drowned.

Another time the Larsen reunion was held at Lake Powell. Allan rented a house boat from a friend, Daniel Polatis, who kept it at the lake year round and who offered to meet our family there and help with the driving.

Prior to us leaving Blackfoot for the reunion, we received a phone call from Lindsay telling us that Stephani had delivered a baby girl that morning. We were so excited and added a stop at Utah Valley Hospital in Provo to our itinerary for the day.

When we arrived at the hospital, we all crowded around the nursery window to get our first glimpse of Katie Bennion, the first grandchild on



both the Larsen and Richards' sides.

When I first saw her I was alarmed by all the bruising on her head and face since in our phone conversation Lindsay hadn't mentioned that it had been an especially difficult delivery. As Stephani visited with us I realized that she had had

quite a tough time. She didn't even realize that most babies didn't look as beat up as little Katie was. Well, it was over and I didn't want to upset her so I didn't tell her how alarmed I was and how badly I felt that she had had such a traumatic experience with her first delivery.

After saying goodbye to the Bennions, we headed south and arrived at Lone Rock Beach later that day. We brought a large army tent for our family. We pitched it right along the beach but soon found that putting a tent up in sand was certainly more of a challenge than in the mountains where the ground was firm. We got along pretty well until the wind blew and then the tent pegs ripped out of the ground and our tent collapsed. Every day about five in the afternoon, a wind came off the water and dropped our tent. At first it was funny, but before the reunion was over, we got tired of it. We resolved that the next time we would bring a



tent with fiberglass poles that suited the beach better.

Other locations for our reunions included staying in Van Fleet's cabin in Provo Canyon and boating on Deer Creek Reservoir, camping at Sportsman's Park near the American Falls Reservoir, and going as a family to Heise Hot Springs. Steve's brother, Gary, was always good to bring his boat and it was fun for the older cousins to learn to water ski and to ride on the tube that trailed the boat.

Another smaller reunion that became an annual event was Grandma Larsen's yearly Christmas party. With several of the siblings and their families living in the vicinity, it was wonderful to gather at the Larsen's for a Christmas dinner, gift-giving, and program each holiday season. Even Karen and Jim made the effort to travel from Layton to be a part of this fun event. This gathering always ended with a program including Grandpa Allan reading the Nativity story from the scriptures and musical numbers from the family. Although some of the grandchildren may have dreaded this part of the evening, all honored Grandma's wishes and participated.

The Richards' usually went camping for



their reunions. For a few years Grandpa provided a boat and later Charles brought his with extensive boating accessories. The adults and teenagers water skied while the little ones played on the beach. Some of the children's memories include Uncle Nate's converted school bus,

playing Scum until all hours of the night, inspirational camp fire gatherings, and a time when the men administered to Grandma Ilene who was soon to have surgery. David remembered a time when he and his cousin, Lane, got lost but weren't too anxious about it since, "Lane was wearing his CTR ring."

One year while at Red Fish Lake we had a couple of frightening close calls. The first involved Becky. When she was young, Becky would occasionally sleep-walk. We didn't even consider that this might be a problem on a campout and so we didn't take any precautions. One night after Stephani, Shauntel, and Becky had gone to sleep, Becky unzipped the tent and went out wandering into the night. To this day I can't remember who brought her back but somehow



she had stumbled into a camp and the campers realized that she was sleep-walking and they searched until they got her safely returned to us.

Another time we were at Red Fish Lake and had been unable to get a good camping site with beach access so we were camped a short distance away from the lake. Of course, the rule was that everyone absolutely had to have a life jacket on if they were going to go into the lake. Sometimes the adults would be in camp fixing meals and the older kids would be floating the lake on inner tubes; the younger ones usually staying in camp with the adults.

At this reunion, Brenda had come without Charles. He was in medical school and couldn't get away so we had all been helping Brenda with her children. We were all in camp except for a few of the older cousins who had gone into the lake when we realized that three year old Sean was nowhere in sight. We began to make a cursory search when, all at once, someone saw him, floating on an inner tube out to meet some of his older siblings. We were alarmed; he was not wearing a life jacket! He was hardly big enough to stretch himself across the tube and



was teetering precariously! Needless to say, we all ended up at the water's edge, trying to stay calm and talk Sean back to the shore. We yelled to the other cousins, alerting them to the problem and they paddled their way back, trying not to get Sean too excited or cause him to fall off of the tube. It was a huge relief when at last he was hauled ashore, safe and sound!

One of the items on the agenda at each Richards' reunion was the garage sale extravaganza! Grandma and Grandpa would go to garage sales all year and then bring their "treasures" to the reunion and share them with all of us. We layed the items out on picnic tables and then each family took a turn picking what they wanted. The "treasures" included clothing, shoes, coats, levis, swim suits, boots, hats, costumes; pots, pans and other kitchen things; bedding, towels, and anything else imaginable. It was great fun for



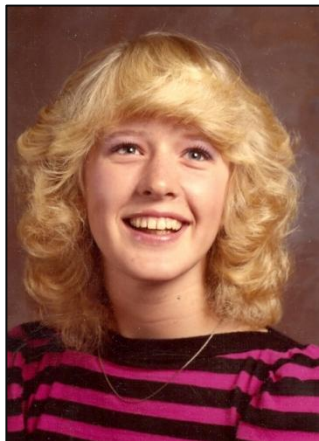
all of us and proved to be a wonderful blessing during those years of heavy financial demands and increased needs.

The Family Circle (or is it "Circus?")

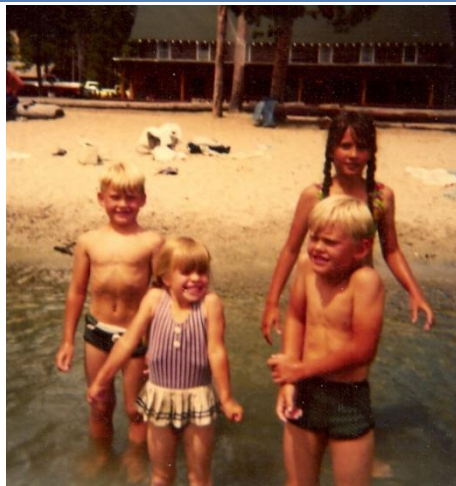
It was of interest to me as the years past that the kids seemed to pair off according to their birth order. Stephani and Shauntel were close and Stephen and David were inseparable. Becky and John were always supportive of each other and Mike and Paul were the best of buddies from the start. And although they were separated by nine years, Tim and SaraKay always had a special bond.

During their high school years Stephani and Shauntel got along fairly well. They each developed their own close friends, but sharing a bedroom and bathroom, going to piano lessons together, and driving back and forth to school put them in close proximity and created a strong bond. They worked in harvest together, both were employed at Kesler's Market, and shared common friends in Chamber Singers since they were only a year apart in school. I don't remember them ever being "at each other's throats" like some siblings but they did have their moments.

When Stephani got old enough to drive to



school, Shauntel tagged along. It wasn't unusual for Stephani to be ready for school a little sooner than Shauntel and she would be out in the green Toyota, motor running, and



prodding Shauntel on with honking the horn. They seldom shared clothes since Stephani was of a more conservative nature and Shauntel tended to favor the trendy fashions. Stephani had very blond hair; Shauntel had dark hair with an olive complexion and it was always a point of interest that the two of them were sisters although looking nothing alike.

During Stephani's senior year she served as a student body officer. As the year end approached Shauntel decided to run for an office and became heavily involved with campaigning. By the time the week of elections was over, the whole affair had been exhausting. The day of the voting came and Stephani and the other officers sequestered themselves in the main office after school to count the ballots. Shauntel came home after school and eagerly awaited Stephani's arrival, thinking that she knew her sister well enough that she could tell by her expression whether she had won the election or not.

After an excruciating hour, Stephani arrived home. Both Shauntel and I met her at the door, anxious to know if Shauntel had won her spot. She told us that she couldn't reveal the election results until the school dance that evening, but we both could tell by her crestfallen appearance that Shauntel had lost. When we guessed the outcome, Stephani confirmed it. Shauntel lost by one vote! It was a devastating moment for her and many tears



were shed.....not just by Shauntel but by her older sister as well.

When Jonie joined the family I assumed that she would pair off with her sisters, but she gravitated towards the twins or the four little boys. She seemed secure in her place in the family as well as having a host of good friends she chummed around with at school.



possible without risking forfeiture of our prize sucker. My last memory of her in my childhood is seeing her drive away, heading for Minnesota with a car full of stuffed animals to protect her. I think if I had realized how long it would be until I would see her again, I would have cried. Jonie was a unique part of our family and I'll always have a special place in my heart for her.

[Paul] *Jonie is my Indian sister. When she was eight years old, she came to live with us through the Church's Indian Placement Program. She ended up staying with us since both her parents had died. She seemed a little more strict than my other siblings and I'm convinced she thought we were pretty crazy at times. For example, one morning during potato harvest she came upstairs to find my older brothers using a mail scale to weigh potato chips and thus ensure that everyone received an equal amount in their lunch. Jonie commented, "I can't believe I'm part of this family!" I think that we (the little kids) got on her nerves sometimes because I remember a few sarcastic remarks here and there. When I would announce (looking back, I'm not sure why I would do this) that I was going to use the restroom, she'd reply, "I'll tell the newspaper." One time she made a deal with us that she would give us each a sucker if we would take a bite out of a tomato (we hated tomatoes.) We all lined up and, one by one, approached Jonie and the dreaded tomato with trepidation but determination. We took as small a bite as*

Stephen and David were some of my easiest children to raise. Although their early years had been traumatic for us all, as they got older they mellowed and became a delight. They had their "best friend" living right in the same household with them and they never disagreed or had issues with each other. They had other friends but neither of them had other friends that ever replaced the bond they shared with each other.

They were so like-minded that it was as if they were identical not only in appearance but in every other way as well. They shared an interest in weight lifting, stamp collecting, basketball, and both played the piano. They attended all their scouting activities together. They would sing duets and when playing church basketball they were referred to as the "Twin Towers". They were so contented and mild that it brought a

peaceful feeling into our home that was a welcome relief after all the ups and downs of raising three emotionally charged teen-age girls!



[Rebecca] *Writing about Steve independently of Dave is impossible. It is like separating the left hand from the right. Those two*

completed each other's thoughts and sentences and embarked on every escapade together. Sometimes I thought they were their own "family" within a family. There was Steve and Dave, and then there were the rest of us. They seemed to be immune to peer pressure or insecurities because they had each other. They didn't need to be cool or to justify their choices because they had immediate validation from their brother."

[David] Our early years were challenging ones with each other. I don't remember it being so bad, but Mom recalls wishing she could trade places with a soldier on the battlefield rather than deal with the wars between Steve and me on the home front. Something magical happened to us around the age of eight that converted us into best friends. While other twins we knew lamented their perceived lost identity, I enjoyed the fact that people had a hard time telling us apart. I think one reason I didn't mind was that I always thought so highly of Steve. We thought very much alike. It wasn't uncommon for Steve or me to break out singing a song at the same time...and oftentimes it was the same song. We even received very similar Patriarchal blessings. Steve and I did almost everything together



growing up. Even when we went to college, we were roommates. Every night before going to sleep we would tell each other, "I love you. If you need to say anything, wake me up."

[Stephani] One of my earliest memories of Steve is of him coming into my room (shared with Shawnie). We decided that the only way to keep him and David out was to use their fear of girls—so we would pull out our big dolls (2 ½ ft tall) and pretend that Steve and Dave were coming in to see their girlfriends. They would run out of the room yelling!

I remember the infamous scales—used to measure everything from cereal to ice cream to potato chips. And of course their "auctions" where they would sell off all their junk to the younger boys. I remember taking Steve and Dave to Shakey's Pizza after they got their Eagles for the "All you can Eat" buffet. After going back about six times, they finally slowed down and Steve (or maybe it was Dave) said, "For the first time in my life, I'm full." One of my favorite memories was when we did the "Larsen 5" scripture team for seminary. We practiced every day and by the time the seminary competition came up, we were smoking! If I remember right, Shawnie and I also took Steve and Dave out on their first day to "Karate Kid (or was it Karate Kid II?)".



[Shauntel] When I was 13 we had just moved into the Rockford house and were enjoying the perks of living in suburbia: neighbors close by (won't you go home Shawn Bailey?), a neighborhood ball park, and wonder of wonders, a corner grocery store with a generous supply of penny candy within biking distance. At least it was within biking distance for those of us Mom trusted to cross the streets alone, which didn't include those in the family younger than Steve and Dave. Steve and I soon realized that we could capitalize on this inequity and we formed a family candy store: S and S's G.Y.P. (which stood for Great Year-round Prices, fondly referred to be various family members as the gyp-joint). Steve and I would pool our money, cycle down to the store, choose penny candy for purchase which had multiple pieces (think Smarties and Bottle Caps), and then return home and sell the individual pieces of candy at a significant mark-up to family members and neighbors. We were doing the family a service, really, providing candy anytime someone had a hankering for something sweet and couldn't get to the store, and at a reasonable price—just a penny. Steve proved to be a good business man even then, helping us market our product to the younger set and keeping me from eating all the stock.



[Rebecca] Steve and Dave would orchestrate “auctions” of their treasures to their younger siblings. These treasures would include items like old socks, broken toys, used stamps, etc.After repeated toilet papering from Stephani and Shauntel's teenage friends, Steve and Dave decided to set up an alarm system so that we could catch the perpetrators in the act. They threaded fishing line around the swing set/crossbars and yard swing at ankle level and then they took the fishing line down through their basement window and attached it to the power switch of their radio cassette player. Not long thereafter we were shocked to hear a mix of static and loud music blaring from the basement. While all of us looked around in confusion, Steve and Dave ran to the back yard to see who they had caught. It turned out to be a dog. I think Mom told them that she appreciated their

concern and creativity, but we would all have heart failure if that radio alarm went off in the middle of the night!

Steve and Dave begged Mom to let them dig a hole in the pasture to make a really super cool fort. I guess they wanted the fort to have a basement or something like that. After hours—and I do mean hours—of digging (with us watching from the dining room window), they changed their plan and decided it would be a trap. Mom and Dad got concerned that the trap would



break a horse's leg or hurt an unsuspecting child, so they had to fill in the hole. Then they moved to the back pasture fence and built a two-story fort with scrap wood. I don't know how the fort really looked—in my child brain's memory, it was about the most amazing thing I had ever seen.

One summer Steve and Dave decided that merely swimming in the canal was not holding their interest. We needed to build rafts! Soon it developed into a competition to see whose raft could stay afloat the longest. We gathered supplies like empty milk jugs, scrap wood and twine, and then started assembling. We had a great time trying to get the rafts to actually float.

Steve and Dave built a "blanket hotel" in the bedroom with blankets tucked in the closet doors, under the bunk bed mattresses, etc., to make different rooms. They also made the entrance "password protected." Each of us younger kids got one password that we could say into the intercom unit they had purchased from Deseret Industries. Once they verified that our password was correct, we were allowed entrance. If we lost or forgot our password, we would have to pay ten cents to get a new one.

I remember when they went to their first bi-stake dance. They got home and said it was so disappointing because they only danced a few times. When I asked them a few more questions, I realized that they had not really asked anyone to dance—they had waited for the girls to ask them! For the next dance, I told them that I would pay them for every girl they asked to dance. They would not get paid for any dance where the girl did the asking. I ended up owing one of them eleven cents and one of them fourteen cents (maybe it was one cent per dance?) and it was the best money I ever paid to



them. From that point on they would arrive at the beginning of the dance and dance the night away. They were so good to ask a lot of girls—some who they were sweet on, and some who they just thought needed to be asked to dance.

[Paul] Steve and Dave were largely responsible for most of my more humorous experiences growing up. They somehow

created an aura of mystery and excitement about everything they did, thoroughly convincing the younger constituency within our family that they knew what was cool, fun, and important. They



taught us karate, which they had mastered by reading a karate book and inviting their "karate friend" over twice. They also spearheaded a project to build a large, two-story fort in our pasture. The fort came fully equipped with a huge, hidden hole in which to throw trespassers and enemies. Later on, they convinced my parents to let them build a fortress (which still stands to this day) upon the rafters in our garage. With their great creativity, Steve and Dave invented many games. Most of which involved torturing us while convincing us it was fun. For example, they would lay us on a sheet of fiberglass insulation taken from the storage room and tickle us. They would also have us run

through the game room, trying to dodge the balls they hurled at us.

I marvel at Steve and Dave's enterprising spirit and their ability to market to their younger siblings. Using their computer, a Commodore 64, they printed a classy sign for their door informing all who desired to enter that in order to do so they must insert a nickel in the appropriate slot (taped onto the sign.) Anyone failing to do so would be tortured. Of course, this heightened the mystery surrounding their room and most of us were dying to enter.

Once they hung up blankets all over their room, turning it into a sort of fort. They then convinced us (even the older siblings) that it was absolutely incredible and we all gladly forked over some money to spend the night there. It was crowded and as I remember, not enjoyable in the least. They also received monthly payments from Stephanie, with whom they had worked out a contract wherein they would receive a penny each month for refraining from burping.

They often gathered us around their bed, behind which they were hiding various objects worth little to nothing. Upon offering a brief introduction to a particular object, making it seem as though it was the greatest treasure this side of the Mississippi, they would pull it out from behind the bed, revealing its splendor and glory. They would then proceed to auction it off to us and we would later marvel at how in the world they had convinced us to buy such useless trash at such high prices. I don't think I fully appreciated their ability until I once tried to hold an auction of my own. No one bought anything. In fact, no one even bothered to show up. I will be forever indebted to Steve and Dave for an exciting childhood.

Becky was a junior when John came into high school and I always felt like she was a little



mother hen to him. He always felt welcomed by her group of friends and he in turn always referred to her as "Beautiful Becky!" It was a continuation of their earlier closeness that they both served missions simultaneously. Becky turned 21 when John turned 19 and both submitted their papers, had their interviews, and even had their "farewells" and going-away dinner on the same day. They seemed to be on the same page as far as marriage went and were married just six months apart. Both their families lived in Asia at the same time and were even able to visit with each other and ease the loneliness that was so much a part of their experience.

Mike and Paul were as close as siblings could be. They both enjoyed quiet activities and would spend hours playing with each other with never a cross word or incident. When John was old enough to go to kindergarten he would be absent for half of the day. He had a wonderful treasure trove of small soldiers, muscle men and other assorted figures that he usually carefully guarded. These were in a cardboard box out of the reach of little brother's who might lose or break them.

Mike loved these action figures and sometimes when the weather was





cold and the days were long, I would retrieve the box from the top closet shelf and permit Mike and Paul to sit at the dining room table and set them up. Because they knew this activity

would not be possible if they broke one, they used the greatest care and quietly played for hours. Then before John would return from kindergarten we would carefully return them to their box and stow it away in its special spot. Although we eventually told John what we were doing in his absence, having Mike and Paul so engrossed and entertained for a few hours was a wonderful gift for a tired young mother and I always felt like the Lord had blessed us with these two quiet little boys during those years of a chaotic and harried household.



It was interesting to watch Mike and Paul as they got into junior high and high school. They each had their own circle of friends, but frequently they overlapped and shared activities since they were only a year apart in school. They were in Chambers together and also performed in “The Music Man” and “Shenandoah”, the school musical Mike’s senior year. Mike seemed to be more concerned about the social scene during those years and served on the student council as a senior. Paul had a great group of friends but never really cared too much if he was in or out of the “in” crowd.

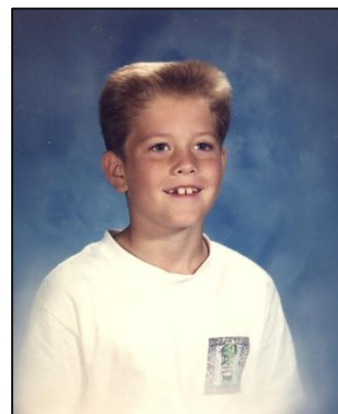
When Becky returned from serving her mission to Oklahoma, she brought each member of our

family a gift. I remember well that she brought Paul a t-shirt that had Born Again Christian slogans all over it such as, “I love Jesus”, and “Born again and proud of it!” It was so different from anything that you would see in the West but Becky said that it was very typical for the “Bible belt” and she couldn’t resist bringing one home.

Well, one day Mike and Paul had a debate tournament that they were going to be attending. They were both supposed to dress up for the tournament but the coach told them to wear casual clothes for the long bus ride. Paul chose to wear his “Jesus” t-shirt. Later Mike told me that he couldn’t believe that Paul would wear that shirt to a debate tournament where the ultimate “cool” students were sure to be present. But, he said that Paul was so casual about it that no one gave it much thought and it hadn’t been as embarrassing as Mike had feared it would be.

Tim had been raised in the rough and tumble world of his three older brothers and so when SaraKay was born it was natural for me to assume that Tim would be disappointed that I hadn’t had a baby brother for him. This was not the case. From the time that she arrived home from the hospital Tim was her self-appointed nanny. He developed a soft side that none of the rest of us had ever seen. I thought that in time he would grow tired of having a little sister and maybe even resent having to share the spotlight with her but as she grew, his involvement continued.

One thing he did make clear, though, was that he wanted her to be a ball player and not a prima



donna. Although she could be a tomboy, her feminine side wasn't to be denied and often, while Tim was at school, SaraKay would do all the little girl things that most girls do. One day he arrived home to find her wrapped in a pink lace tablecloth and dancing ballerina-like to songs from Disney's "Little Mermaid". He looked at her quizzically and asked me, "Who told her that she was a girl?"



the circus fat lady!" I was ready to strangle him!

Sometimes Tim was SaraKay's best friend and other times, her worst enemy. When she was about four I made her a little red princess dress for her costume for Halloween. As was usually the case in Idaho in late October, the weather for trick-or-treating was cold and miserable. I convinced SaraKay that she would have to wear her winter coat if she went out from door-to-door and she bemoaned the fact that her coat would surely cover her costume and no one would see that she was a princess.

When Tim came along we officially dubbed John, Mike, Paul, and Tim as the "four little boys". Our large house and 2½ acres of yard and pasture provided plenty of room to roam. Their two older brothers had been examples of finding creative activities to fill their free time and they picked up right where their older brothers left off. Their imaginations seemed to run wild and often they involved the neighborhood kids in their adventures. These "adventures" sometimes got them into trouble and my constant fear was that we would alienate the neighbors as a result of their schemes.

Finally a compromise was struck. She would wear her coat under her costume. This stretched the dress to its limits, as one can imagine, but the whole time we were getting her fixed up I continued to praise her and tell her how cute she looked and reassured her that those she called on would certainly know that she was a great and grand princess! Just before we left to go trick-or-treating, Tim arrived home from school. One look at SaraKay and he said, "And what are you?" With a bit of a pout she replied, "I am a princess!"

"Well, he said. You could have fooled me. I thought you were

One such episode involved the "potato gun" that they invented. They discovered that if you had a short length of PVC pipe and a plunger made of a



smaller (in circumference) piece, you could place a small piece of potato in the end, spray WD40 in the pipe, force the plunger down, and it would create a small explosion that would propel the potato out the end, hurling it far into the air, or as happened one day, into the side of Hanni's house! These splats brought our new neighbors out of their house and over to ours where they extracted a promise from the guilty parties that they would never aim it their way again.

Another favorite pastime was making small mud balls into which they would put a firecracker with only the wick visible. They purchased these illegal fireworks at a neighborhood fireworks stand which was known throughout the area for not only having regular fireworks, but also had a back room full of questionable products. How everyone in the community knew of this "back room" (except for the police) was always a mystery to me.) Anyway, armed with their ammunition, the boys would prepare for war.

They would get large cardboard boxes and create forts and set up the staging of a mud ball war. They would light the firecrackers and toss them at the opposing team, trying to time it so that the explosion would occur close enough to the other team members to spray them with mud. These wars were one of their favorite activities despite my objections to the dangers involved. They even had group dates and involved some girls in this raucous activity, much to my dismay!

They also liked to bring a bunch of friends to the house and turn off all the lights and have everyone hide and play "Murder in the Dark". These parties were hugely popular, the only downside being that Daddy and I were confined to our bedroom with only the use of a dim lamp while the game was being played since it required total darkness to be truly effective. I always expected the pool of available girls to dry up from their involvement in these crazy

activities but it never seemed to happen. I guess we should have been grateful that this kind of "wild party" was the only kind they participated in.



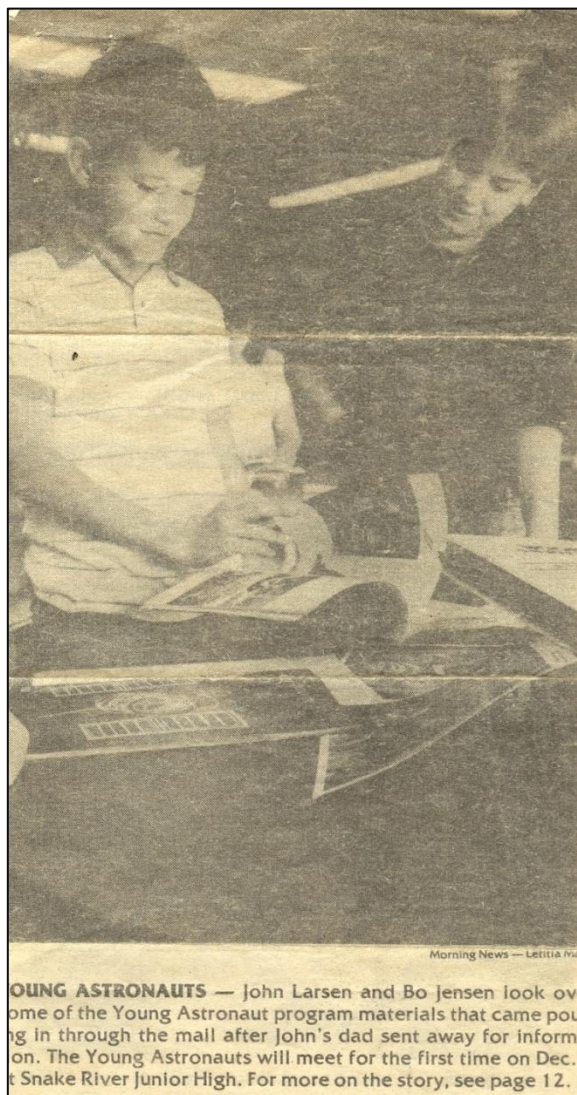
No history would be complete without mentioning the seasonal forays into the nearby canal. I'm sure to some "city slicker" swimming in the canal would be totally unacceptable, considering that it wasn't cleaned, filtered, and chlorinated, but to a bunch of energetic kids who were hot, bored, and looking for fun, the canal was irresistible. Many a happy hour was spent in that five-foot-deep stream of moving water. The kids floated on tubes, used scrape lumber to make rafts, did cannonballs off of the bridge, collected frogs, speared fish, and just lazily floated downstream to cool off on a hot summer's day. Although we all agreed that this was certainly an unsanitary thing to do (one time a dead and bloated cat went floating by), never-the-less it never lost its charm and only went out of style when the kids grew up and left Moreland for more sanitized pursuits.

At some point in the '70's our school district started a PACE program. It was a program for the "gifted and talented" students who weren't as challenged in a normal classroom setting.

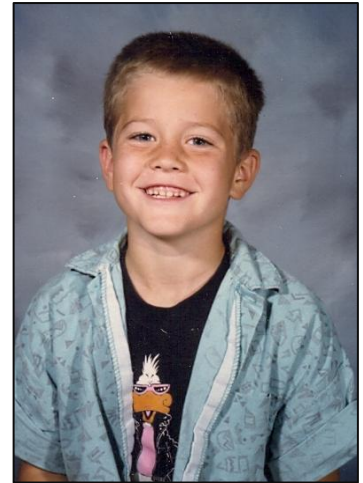
When Shauntel was in fourth grade she was tested for PACE and qualified to participate, but since the students were taken out of the regular classroom for a couple hours a week, Shauntel didn't want to participate and we didn't force the issue. The program was then discontinued for a few years and then when John was in fourth grade it was started up again. He was tested and qualified to be in it and loved that opportunity.

Two years later when Mike was tested, he didn't quite qualify. He was so disappointed. A few weeks later, Artje Crumley, the PACE teacher, called and invited Mike to join her class. She said that the group of his peers that were in the program were such a timid bunch that they were struggling to interact and the activities weren't as fun as she wanted them to be. She knew that Mike was well liked and full of energy. Mike was overjoyed and loved being in PACE and Artje loved Mike!

When Paul came along he was tested for PACE but the results came back inconclusive. Artje knew that he was smart and couldn't figure out what was going on. By the time she contacted me, I knew why. It was determined about that



time that Paul was mildly cross-eyed and that explained why on the spatial part of the test the results were poor. Artje offered to test him again once he got his new glasses and his



eyes had a chance to adjust, but he wasn't that concerned about it and so we let it pass.

Tim was never one to lack confidence. When I noticed that he was rubbing his eyes a lot I decided that we should get them checked. He was so cooperative during the exam that the doctor said to him, "You sure are smart, Tim. He replied in his typical self assured way, "I know."

Following is an account I wrote entitled "The Lesson Timothy Taught". *It has been said that divorce is hard on everyone in the family, but seldom is it noted that close next-door neighbors suffer, too. Indeed, when the rock of divorce dropped in our neighborhood pool, its ripple effects expanded to influence us as well. We watched, saddened to see our good friend and neighbor, Fred, now face life alone.*

One night at the supper table I brought up the subject, trying to evoke some empathy for the drama next door. "You see," I said, "Fred is going to have some tough times now that he is alone."

Without hesitation my five-year-old, Tim, corrected my statement. "He's not alone, Mama. He's got us!" Everyone agreed. He may be without his wife and family, but he does have





us, his neighbors! And so we began. With little acts of kindness the distance between our homes shortened. It was not so momentous a venture, but as time went by, we found time to visit. Tim led the way, reminding me each time

the kitchen smelled of hot cookies, that Fred would appreciate a plate and that when the vegetables ripened in the garden, Fred would enjoy a basketful.

As Tim got a little older his three older brothers loved to involve him in their antics. They would tell him wild stories about school or other things and sometimes he had a difficult time knowing the difference between truth and error.

As the time for kindergarten drew near, his brothers told him that he needed to memorize his addition facts before he could ride the school bus. They drilled him on this for weeks before his first day of school. Two plus two is four, four plus four is eight, eight plus eight is 16, and so forth. I don't know how far they got with it but later he told me that when he met the bus that first day and the door swung open, he started reciting his addition facts and the bus driver, looking a little perplexed, waved him into his seat. He'd passed the test! Who knows what other ruses they dreamed up to complicate his life!

A FAMILY OF EAGLES

Since both Steve and I had been raised in families that were involved in scouting, when our own sons came of age, we added that involvement to our list of activities. I must admit that at times it seemed like just one more demand on our time and resources but we persisted and the boys willingly complied and worked to follow in their Dad's footsteps and earn their Eagle Scout

Award. **Stephen and David** had their board of review on July 1st, 1984; both got their Eagle Awards the same day. We were so proud of them! At their Eagle Court of Honor I read the following tribute:

On June 18, 1970 Stephen and David arrived, freshly sent from heaven to bless our lives and at times, try our patience. They were sickly their first year, sharing every sore throat, ear infection and flu bug. But, with time the sick spells diminished and they were for the most part robust and healthy. From birth they have been competitive and in their early years they were a source of contention in our home. I doubled in my role as mother and referee. They couldn't get along with or without each other and any effort to keep them apart for any length of time failed. They stuck to each other like glue! After one exasperating day of being referee I expressed to my mother, "The only thing that keeps me going is knowing that we are one day closer to their mission calls!"

But the years passed and there came a mellowing of their temperaments. They are identical the doctor told us and through the years many



incidents have confirmed that fact. When they returned with their father from their first grade physicals, they said that the doctor had called them two pea pods. Truly in many ways they are like two peas in a pod. But to talk about them today as a single unit would be a disservice to them...and yet to describe them separate and apart is somehow nearly impossible. I will attempt to do a little of each.

Stephen's strongest interests and loves are in computers and art. He is comfortable doing quiet things and enjoys sketching all kinds of pictures. He took an art class in school from Mrs. Marriott last year and she expressed to me, "Stephen is very gifted in his art work and many of his projects are the envy of his classmates. He takes instruction well and is responsive to my suggestions for improvement."

When Stephen was in third grade he started taking piano lessons. It did not come easily for him and there were times he wanted to call it quits. But perseverance seems to be one of his virtues and he gets up early and puts in his time prior to going to school.

David's loves are his computer, basketball, and his music. A few months ago he shared a dream that he had had regarding a fire in our home. "It was awful, Mom, a real nightmare! I dreamed we had a horrible fire in our house and we didn't get our computer out!"

When returning from his super activity this summer I tried to get him to admit that he had missed us. After coaxing him a little he finally confessed. "Okay, I did get homesick...for my computer!"

David loves basketball and hopes to get a chance to play on the school or ward team. He also plays the trumpet and seems to enjoy it immensely. Though he will not readily admit it, he enjoys

playing the piano and is faithful in practicing early mornings before school.

For close to two years now Stephen and David have been involved in their own "continuous reading program." Each day they take time to read one chapter from the scriptures and record a short entry in their journal. One of their favorite activities is to have a family member name a date and they will read from their journal entry what took place on that day.

Last summer with scrap lumber they built a club house. They enjoyed spending the nights sleeping in it. One night about 11:00 we heard them come in and wondered if something was wrong. No, nothing was wrong except they had forgotten to read their scriptures and had come in to do that before going to bed.

They are good workers and have for the last several years provided themselves with clothing and other necessities with money earned in spud harvests, moving pipe and mowing lawns. They are frugal, sometimes almost misers, with their money. It's a well-known fact around home that you seldom borrow from Steve and David. You rent or lease. They don't give away their outgrown toys; they auction them off. When they first got their disc drives for their computer, they made up a price list of the various games and you even had to pay to get your code name for entrance into their bedroom to pay for the games you want to play. Needless to say, they keep life interesting with their many schemes and antics.

Each morning their room is left neat and tidy. Even when they left early morning to move pipes, they made their beds prior to leaving their room. They are orderly in their personal habits and retire to bed early most nights.

Stephen and David have seemed to value the opportunity to hold the Aaronic Priesthood and

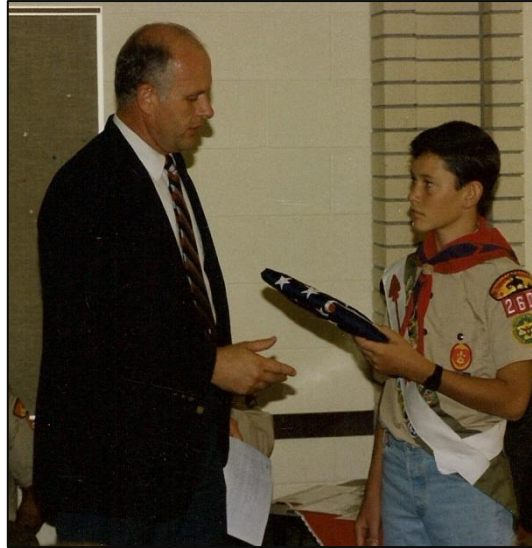
to my knowledge are faithful in their quorum responsibilities. They have always disliked foul language and made an effort to discourage their friends from using it, too.

For two years following their ordination to the priesthood their father was unable to regularly attend with them because of his responsibilities elsewhere.

One morning he arose early to prepare for a conference assignment and found Stephen and David dressed and heading out the door. "Where are you two going?" he inquired. "It's stake priesthood meeting this morning, Dad," was all that was said.

For the most part, they shoulder their responsibilities in all areas with this same initiative. They are conscientious students and are planning to someday serve missions. Their father and I pay tribute to them on this special occasion and I close with the words Alma said to his son, Shiblon. "And now, my son (sons), I trust that I shall have great joy in you, because of your steadiness and your faithfulness unto God; for as you have commenced in your youth to look to the Lord your God, even so I hope that you will continue in keeping his commandments:"

The following two entries were written about **John**, one when he was eleven and the other for his Eagle. I am including them both:



I call him my star gazer—my 11-year-old son—looking upward, searching the skies, wondering at the expanse beyond. I don't recall when it all began, but the tragedy of the Challenger and the return of Haley's comet added fuel to the fire of interest already burning in my young son.

"Set the alarm for 5:00, Mom", had been his request,

as he and his friend, Jeff, positioned the telescope at the south window. When the alarm sounded, I tiptoed into the room to arouse them and quickly returned to bed, hoping for a few more hours of sleep. But upon returning to bed, I could not entirely shake the feeling of excitement regarding the sighting of Haley's and slumber would not come. I could hear them, as they whispered in the darkness and could not resist the urge to watch as they went out into the night, toting their "magic eye" and full of anticipation to see the fiery spectacle.

For a long while I watched them. They stood in the cool darkness of the early morn, huddled together in warm coats and pajamas, marveling at the sky. Some say nothing inspires like the view from a mountaintop on a starry night.

Others claim their inspiration comes from great books or music. I agree these are marvelous things, but in all my years of experiencing the wonders of this world, I still insist there is no wonder quite as amazing as the



wonder of seeing a child grow.....

When John arrived on August 29, 1974, he joined a noisy family of eight. He was preceded by three sisters and two brothers, the oldest being seven. Needless to say, everyone wanted to take their turn caring for him and he cheerfully endured their good intentions. He was from the start a Primary baby, for just three days before his birth I had been called to be the stake Primary president and he traveled with me to the ward and stake primary functions, ever cheerful and sweet. He was so good-natured that he seldom cried and his infant days were a joy. As a toddler he would come and bring me his blanket, indicating it was time for a nap.

As he grew he failed to learn to talk, rarely making any sounds. His Grandma Larsen worried that something might be wrong, but I was so grateful for one quiet child that I wasn't too anxious to take him to a specialist for tests. Soon after he turned three he began to form words and that was the last quiet moments any of us have had.

John is accident-prone. He was hit in the lip by a hard ball playing Little League and had stitches. He has sores from cuts on his hands, he was painfully sunburned on his back and legs on a camping trip with a friend, and his most recent acquisition was a fractured kneecap he received

while going over a small cliff on a tube at a scout camp out. That incident cost him three months in a brace and the chance to play any ball for the basketball season.

His talents include a quick and inquiring mind, an ability to see what needs to be done and the willingness to do it. He is a tinkerer. He likes to work with his hands. He plays the piano and is hoping to replace his older brothers playing for Priesthood. He loves basketball and computers.

When a young boy, he dreamed of traveling in space. He and his father formed a Young Astronaut Club that was adopted by the school district and used for three years.....

At Mike's court of honor in November of '91 I gave the following tribute: In 1776 the Declaration of Independence was signed and a nation was born. Two hundred years later in 1976 another great event took place—Mike Larsen was born! Things haven't been quite the same in the Larsen household since.

Perhaps because everyone else was so vocal and noisy (Mike had four older sisters and three older brothers) Michael appeared quiet and subdued as a child. He would get an encyclopedia from the bookshelf and sit on the couch looking at the pictures for hours. He had an early fascination with bugs, insects, just anything that crept and crawled. His interest led to the acquisition of

aquariums, cages, and scores of pets from the common—such as dogs and mice, to the exotic—such as newts and lizards.

His preoccupation with these creatures had its ups and downs, or should I say, its ins and outs. His prize newt escaped from the moist environment of the aquarium and was later found withered, dead, dry-as-a-bone behind the bedroom dresser. His two lizards escaped and



were discovered crawling up the family room wall only after the whole family had made their recovery a matter of fervent prayer. A large water snake escaped its glass bottle cage and never was found. To this day its whereabouts remains one of the great mysteries of the Larsen universe. Mike's Grandma Larsen, upon hearing of its escape refused to visit our house for weeks following its disappearance fearing it may appear at any moment from beneath a cushion or rug.

Well, Anyway, Mike was unique. We all felt that he talked to the animals and wondered what it would lead to. Once someone ask him what he wanted to be when he grew up and without hesitation he answered, "A worm". Luckily he grew out of that and began to be a little more normal. His interests now include music, debate, maintaining his 4.0 GPA and "enjoying the babes". He has a vivid imagination and has his own private library of books he has authored and collection of pictures he has drawn. He has a lively sense of humor and creates his own "Gary Larsen" type cartoons.

He has myriads of friends and served both his Jr. High years on the student council. Last year Mike was selected by his classmates as a Peer Helper—one who they would choose to go to for a listening ear in a troubled time. That really seemed to fit because whether it was nursing



back to health an orphaned mouse, calming an upset little brother or sister, or generally keeping the peace at home, Mike was there. He has a sensitive spirit and a tender heart.

When Mike was two he was playing outside in the driveway. He crawled beneath a pickup to retrieve a small puppy. The owner of the puppy (and pickup) unaware of Mike, got in and began to back out of the driveway. I watched from the front room window as Mike, on all fours, scrambled beneath the pickup, avoiding the wheels and disaster. That night as I tucked him in bed, I couldn't help thinking, "Thank goodness for Mike!" I've thought it many, many times since and say it again tonight, "Thank goodness for Mike!"

Since I have been unable to locate the tribute I wrote for **Paul** at the time he earned his

Eagle Award, I am going to include excerpts from several letters his Dad and I wrote to and of him over the years:

[Dad] When you were born and we settled on the name of Paul Archibald we felt inspired. You have many of the character traits of the Apostle Paul and your Grandpa Arch. Paul was such a stalwart missionary—valiantly testifying of the Savior before people of every station in life. He loved and cared for his friends and his converts and wrote beautiful letters of encouragement, exhortation, commendation, and testimony. He

was a fiery defender of that which he knew was right.

Your Grandpa Arch is neat and organized. He works systematically and hard. He is willing to do whatever is necessary to get the job done. He is patient and understanding with others and extremely sensitive to their feelings. He is a capable teacher and able to help others see the purpose of their work and how to do it most efficiently. He studies hard to understand things and has a great ability to recall things he has learned and experiences he has gone through.

With many of these characteristics you are like your namesakes. I feel that you are congruent—consistent in your thoughts and actions wherever you are. With you, what you see is what you get because there is no façade or false front put up to impress others. I love you, Paul. I am proud of the stalwart young man you are maturing into. You are definitely one of my six favorite sons!

[Mom] *Brother Watson asked that I write you a letter and encourage you toward your goals. It seems a little strange for me to be encouraging you on goals since you are the most organized and goal-oriented 13 year old that I have ever known. I have been so pleased with your efforts to keep a day-timer, to keep your personal belongings in order and your room clean, and to daily include in your busy schedule the reading of scriptures, the keeping of a journal and personal prayer. When you were cut from the ball team, I thought it might devastate you, but true to form, you just picked yourself up from the disappointment and moved on to other pursuits and interests. I am so proud of you and the dedication that I see in you at this important stage of your life. There just isn't*

anything that I would change about how you are living your life.Paul is a unique and accomplished young man and one that would be an asset to any university. He is orderly and disciplined in his life and in his pursuit of worthy goals. He is very thorough and meticulous in whatever he does and at times appears to be a plodder but he takes the time to do things right and the results have shown his methods to be effective. His piano studies are a prime example. In the early years of lessons he did not progress very rapidly but over the years, through his persistence and attention to detail, he has become an accomplished pianist.

Recently he was struggling with an advanced calculus class. I suggested that we find someone to tutor him and a friend and split the cost of the tutoring. Paul responded, "I need to be on my own with this. I take longer to grasp the concepts, but once I get them, they are in place." He knows himself and pays the price to be successful.

Paul is very motivated to succeed, but he finds time to show kindness to those around him. He lives the gospel and honors his priesthood. He has had numerous obstacles to overcome in his life (we discovered in grade school that his eyes were crossed and he had somehow accommodate for it and gotten by; he suffered from a bone disease that required him to drop out of athletics during his 8-9 grade years) but he has continued to work to accomplish his goals. As far as I know, Paul has read the scriptures daily for the last four years and has a habit of daily personal prayers.

I gave the following tribute when Tim earned his Eagle: Timothy James Larsen was



born on June 17th of '81, the 10th child in the Steve and Sue Larsen home. It was a time of transition for the family; the farm had been sold, the house too, and just two days before Tim arrived the family moved to Rockford and began a new life. Tim let his presence be felt from the very start and soon the family adopted the saying, "Tiny Tim, the terrible tyrant, is having too many temper tantrums today!" Fortunately, with time, Tim began to mellow and his disposition sweetened.

With so many older siblings, he grew up in an adult environment and was given lots of advice on every aspect of his life. His older brothers taught him his addition facts prior to going to school and when he boarded the bus on his first day of kindergarten, he stood by the bus driver and quoted, "1 plus 1 is two; 2 plus 2 is four; 4 plus 4 is eight" and on and on. The driver was surprised and amused but patiently allowed him to continue and then motioned for him to take his seat. When his kindergarten teacher asked the class which TV show was their favorite, most responded with "Sesame Street" or "Mr. Rogers". Tim's reply, "A Team".

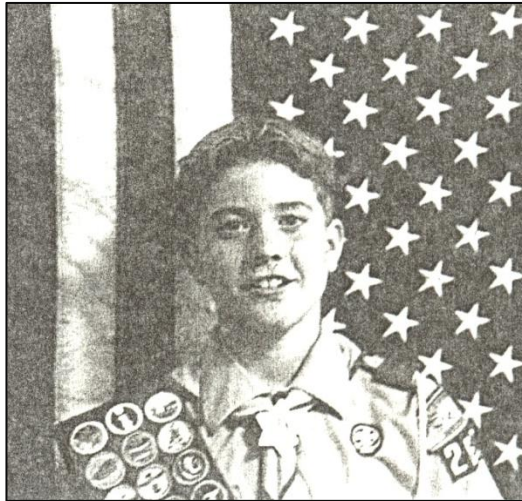
Early in his life his love for sports manifested itself and he followed not only the BYU Cougars but several pro teams, collecting cards and learning stats on many of his favorite players. He himself was a tough competitor at the sports he played and his bedroom wall is full of awards and honors he has received over the years in athletic competitions. He especially loves basketball and can be found on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 6 a.m. playing ball before school.

In 1990 Tim was blessed with a baby sister. All at once this rough and tumble nine-year-old was

introduced to the world of babies, bottles, and pink bows. It came as a surprise to us all when he became SaraKay's biggest admirer and personal nanny. We saw Tim develop a concern, compassion, and tenderness that we hadn't seen in him before. His attentiveness for her and protectiveness of her continues to this day. The other day when he arrived home from school he looked around for her and not finding her, he called out, "SaraKay, I'm home. Come bother me."

Tim is an excellent student, a reluctant but obedient pianist, a hard worker, a gifted athlete

and an avid scouter. He has "tagged along" with his Dad on scout activities for many years before becoming a scout himself and has enjoyed his opportunities to develop himself through the scouting program. He enjoys working with his hands and has decorated his room with crafts he has made over the years. His favorite



classes at school are shop and student service and he recently won first place in the Elks Hoop Shoot contest for boys his age.

He has completed the merit badges required for the Eagle and continues to complete badges and work towards some Palms. He is gritty, honest, determined. He has always wanted to attain the Eagle rank and kept pushing Steve and I so that he could get it accomplished earlier than any of his brothers. His drive and determination sometimes drives us all nuts, but I know that if he can apply these attributes to worthy goals he can accomplish the things that are important to him.

Tim and I used to read the Book of Mormon together each night, but about a year ago he set

out on his own and has consistently read each night. This exercise has matured him and strengthened him in his resolve to be worthy of a mission in the years ahead. Tim has chosen good friends and tries to honor his Priesthood and be obedient to the things his Dad and I ask of him. I congratulate him on this special occasion, express to him my love, and wish him well. Mom

Although all six sons were Eagles, it might be well to mention that they were following in their father's footsteps. He too, earned his Eagle rank. And so, I would like to mention some of his "stellar" traits.

Steve was a man of many talents and appreciated most by those of us who knew him best. One thing he thoroughly enjoyed was using all kinds of funny sayings in his daily conversations. Such as: "I was born at an early age"; "We have 3 and ½ dozen children" (9); "I get my mords wixed"; "I get my tongue wrapped around my eye teeth and I can't see what I'm saying"; "Entree, s'il vous plait" (enter if you please); "Come in and take a mess off your feet"; "I excused you the first time I saw you"; "smells worse than a German wrestler's jock strap"; "...more troublesome than a pay toilet in a diarrhea ward"; "Does the sun come up in the east?"; and the all-time least favorite according to the kids, "It's all in your head!"

But not only did he use funny sayings, he peppered his everyday conversations with wonderful vocabulary words that most of us had never heard before. Sometimes when he was trying to impress us with one of his big words and we would look at him with raised eyebrows,



he would get this funny little grin on his face as if to say, "Aha! I bet you don't even know what that means, do you?" And we didn't; but he told us and we were all the better for it. One time, several years after she had grown up and left our home, Jonie was sitting in a community college class and responded to a question using one of Steve's impressive vocabulary words. Her professor and everyone in the class turned to look at her in surprise and it was all that she could do to suppress a funny little grin!

Speaking of "grins", he was famous in our immediate family for his "Mona Lisa smile". Whenever he was trying to "pull the wool over someone's eyes" he would try to act serious but inevitably his Mona Lisa smile would appear. It was just a slight upturn of the corners of his mouth; but we could "read" it every time and knew that he was trying to conceal his delight over the misconception. Inevitably we would call him on it and he broke into a broad grin and hearty laughter. He just wasn't ever very good at lying or tricking us because his smile would give him away!

Steve was very goal oriented. He always made New Year's resolutions and when the children got old enough, he would have monthly interviews with each one and encourage them in their goal setting. The following 1983 Resolutions are typical of his desires for improvement: (1) *Spend quality time with my family; interviews each quarter and time with each child each week (even if just a couple minutes) and a time out with Sue each week;* (2) *Formally schedule my time in writing, allowing*

time for daily scripture reading, reading the Ensign each month, daily creative thinking time, regular work routine, study and self-improvement, and exercise daily. (3) Lose 25 pounds (1/2 lb. per week) through exercise and disciplined eating habits. (4) Consistently work hard to be able to accomplish sales goals. (5) Resolve all debts except mortgage to be current financially.

He loved to read motivational books, attend seminars, and listen to motivational tapes while he drove to and from work. He was always open to new ideas and tried to stay current with trends in the business community. He had a personal mission statement that included his responsibilities as husband, father, teacher, neighbor, friend, Christian, brother and son. He had a well organized file of articles and quotes from trade journals, magazines, news sources, and Church magazines and he would share them with his family and use them when he gave talks and presentations.

John's remembrances reflect Steve's continuing love affair with books: *Dad is also a man of knowledge and learning. One of my most vivid images of him is him sitting in the living room chair with a lamp on, reading a book. He would read almost every morning and night and had a large collection of great church books and other literary works. He was not only learned, but also wise. If I ever had a question about money, school, the gospel, or anything else, I could trust that Dad either had a good answer or knew where to look for one. I loved to talk to him because I felt like he both knew a lot and respected and appreciated what I knew.*

He loved poetry and insightful quotes and his talks were peppered with wonderful references from famous people as well as classic poems. He

took upon himself to memorize as many poems as he could and often used them in the speeches he would give. Recently I came across a talk he had given when he was first transferred to Wales on his mission. His talk was full of wonderful quotes, poems, and lots of good material that he had carefully put together to get across his message.

This penchant for using all kinds of resources was supported by the habit of taking copious notes in meetings. His day-timers were full not only of appointments and schedules, but of notes from many of the talks he heard while attending professional conferences or Church-related



meetings. Although it would be impossible to transcribe all of the notes he took over the years, it was obvious that he valued what he was learning and made every effort to record it. I was especially grateful for this habit since many of our sweet times together were when he would return from a seminar or priesthood leadership meeting and sit with me and rehearse what the speakers had said.

I thought it would be interesting to mention one such meeting when they were instructed by Boyd Henderson, the Regional Representative from the Pocatello Area in '82. Here are some notes from Elder Henderson's instruction: *Law of*

tithing related to Church's ability to build churches and temples. Bruce R. McConkie says, "Get new scriptures!" Regarding church welfare; No commodities for the idler. Regarding investing: Provo, Utah is the scheme capital of the world. Never borrow for investing. Regarding redeeming the dead: High priests should "get moving".

Another of Steve's talents was the ability to figure out how things worked. Just a few of the many things he successfully fixed: the oven, washing machine and dryer (numerous times), replaced several toilets and water heaters; cleaned the chimney; laid vinyl flooring in the bathrooms; hung drapes, installed and created valances; totally installed a new furnace; tuned-up lawn mowers and roto-tillers annually; changed the oil in our cars; created a swing, bike rack, and jungle gym set by welding metal pipes together; installed a split rail fence to enclose our pasture; made shelves for our storage area; framed in and sheet-rocked the basement of the desert house; repaired the garbage disposal; sand blasted the brick wainscoting on our house; and constructed a nine-foot table that was the gathering place in our home for many years.

Steve was able to do all of his own bicycle repairs and tune-ups, unclog plugged drains, replace leaky faucets and electrical connections, replace the worn carpet in our 12 passenger van, and extend the life of many small appliances by several years through his expertise. Plumbers and handymen were an endangered species at our house. We all knew that Daddy could do it if anyone could and he saved us thousands of dollars over the years with his mechanical abilities.

He also changed flat tires, rescued us when we ran out of gas, put up with late nights and slumber parties, foot the bill for feeding our huge family, was patient when the kids drove on a flat tire until it shredded, or sucked something into

the vacuum that burned up the belt. He never complained about the long distance charges on the phone bill or the driver's-side seat (in his car) that had been moved to accommodate shorter legs and had not been returned to its original position, or shovels that didn't get the mud washed off of them and became rusted.

He was cheery and good-natured. He never lost sleep over anything. He could sleep anywhere at any time and often would be fast asleep just seconds after his head hit the pillow. He claimed it was because he had such a clear conscience and we believed him. He was too long for most beds and too tall and wide for airplane and concert hall seats. He had to be careful not to bump his head on light fixtures or low stair wells and occasionally would be asked by someone trying to be funny, "How's the weather up there?"

And so to sum it all up, Steve was protector, defender, role model, handy man, friend, and patriarch and if there was such a place, he would surely be enthroned in the Eagle Scout "Hall of Fame".

PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS

One night I had a dream and in this dream I was informed that my Dad would be called to be a patriarch. The next day I called Grandma and told her of my dream and she thought it was very interesting. I also mentioned that I didn't give much credence to the dream since that same night I had dreamed that Grandma Clara Richards was holding off the British army in her house in West Jordan, Utah! We had a good laugh about that but it really came as no surprise a few weeks later when Mom called to inform me that Daddy had indeed been called to serve as the stake patriarch.

I was so proud of him since I had long felt that only a truly spiritual man could fulfill this highly revelatory calling. Mom told me that never had

Daddy been so apprehensive, so focused, and spent so much time in fasting and prayer as he did prior to giving the first of many blessings. Mom would prepare the transcribed blessings for the recipients. They were a good team.

One time en route to a company convention we dropped off the three youngest boys and spent the night with my parents. There was a mini-series that I had been following on TV and I wanted to watch it while we were with them in Moses Lake. I noticed that when it came on Daddy got up and left and went into another room. When I questioned why, Mom said that Daddy had to carefully guard what he watched and listened to because the Spirit could not be with him if he didn't. It helped me realize the price he paid for successfully fulfilling his calling.

Later I asked Daddy how it works when he gives a blessing. He said that it differs with each patriarch. Of course the blessing will be given in the language of the patriarch (his manner of speaking). Some patriarchs see a panorama of events in their mind and describe this to the person receiving the blessing but for Daddy it was just receiving impressions in his mind and giving voice to them. During the transcription process (taking the blessing off of the tape) he would take the liberty of editing the blessing before mailing the final copy to the member. This process was not meant to alter the promises made, but rather to clarify ideas. Daddy told me that pronouncing these patriarchal blessings was the most challenging church assignment he had ever had. A copy of the finished blessing was also mailed to Church headquarters and kept in the archives of the Church. Following are the patriarchal blessings for all of the children.



Stephen and mine are included in our personal histories.

Stephani Larsen August 7, 1981 Patriarch Rulon R. Parks Blackfoot Idaho West Stake

Sister Stephani Larsen, in the name of Jesus Christ I lay my hands upon your head and by virtue of the Priesthood I hold as a Patriarch, I give unto you a Patriarchal Blessing.

Dear Sister, your Father in Heaven loves you for you are one of His chosen daughters of this dispensation. He shall bless, guide, and inspire you by the light of the Holy Ghost as you continue to keep His

Commandments. Satan desires you but you shall have strength to overcome him and put all evil thoughts behind you. He cannot tempt you, dear Sister, without your permission. I bless you with strength to resist the buffetings of Satan. There may be times when he will try to cause to stray or doubt the truth of the Gospel but you shall have a power within you, as one of the chosen of Israel, to resist him.

You came to earth to fill a special place in the kingdom of your Heavenly Father and for this privilege you

rejoiced as a spirit in the Spirit World. You were privileged to come when the Gospel had been restored, to chosen parents, prepared to teach and guide you in gaining eternal salvation.

Great is your birth and your birthright for you are of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You were born to the house of Joseph thru the loins of Ephraim through the birthright blessings of Israel. As you keep the commandments of your Heavenly Father these blessings shall shine forth in your life for you shall be endowed with an understanding of the truth. The Gospel shall hold no mysteries in your life. Your descendents here on earth shall be blessed as you teach

them and only as you live to keep the Commandments shall you enjoy this birthright blessing.

Dear Sister, take courage." Through the Holy Ghost your Heavenly Father will guide you in all that you do and your burdens of life shall be light. Although trials may come you shall be blessed in spirit to look forward and see above the obstacles of life, greater things eternally.

I bless you to become a leader among your friends; to be a leader and inspiration for good. As you walk in righteousness there will be many who shall seek to follow your example and teachings. Do not be discouraged or deceived by Satan or evil followers but go forward with a determination to do right and you shall reap the blessings here of the faithful. The youth of Zion shall look to you as the one to turn to when they need encouragement and someone to stand by them in facing difficulties and solving problems in righteousness.

Stephani, I bless you in the blessings of the earth, both spiritual and temporal and with wisdom beyond your years to see the light to choose the course in life which will bring you eternal blessings. Study and learn the Scriptures that you may know the work of your Savior. You shall be blessed to understand all that is recorded. You shall know the truth of the spoken word as there shall be no mysteries unto you.

Dear Sister, I bless you in choosing your companion. Walk forward and uprightly with your goals set high and you shall be blessed with a spirit from within to make a wise choice in finding one worthy to assist you in life's greatest blessing of having an eternal posterity, a family sealed to you in the Temple of your Heavenly Father.

I bless you in all your teachings with the spirit of discrimination, to know and understand those spirits who come into your home that you may be wise in faith and leadership in the work of your Father in Heaven's children. I bless you in leading the way. There will be many of your posterity holding the Priesthood and carrying the words of truth into the mission field and people of the world. Great shall be your joy as you

see them go out serving in the manner that you have been living; proclaiming the truth that you know will bring salvation in the kingdom of your Lord and Savior. Your children shall grow up with a desire to follow you as you teach the truth and show the way. They shall be inspired by a virtuous mother full of faith and understanding. This is your eternal gift and blessing. The light of the Priesthood shall shine forth in your home. You shall be blessed with wisdom needed in assisting your companion to solve the problems of the family and in making decisions in life.

Dear Sister, do not become discouraged for these blessings shall come as you keep the faith. You shall be blessed in overcoming your trials and eternal life shall be yours. I bless you that as you live and keep the Commandments of your Father in Heaven you shall grow old in the beauty of womanhood, loved and admired by many. You shall be respected as a leader throughout your days by those who know you.

I bless you with all blessings that are for your good and growth in the work of your Heavenly Father. You shall have many blessings, too numerous to mention at this time. I seal these blessings upon you according to your faithfulness in keeping the Commandments of your Father in Heaven. I seal you up that you may come forth on the morning of the first resurrection clothed in the blessings of eternal life, there to progress eternally with your posterity. I do this by virtue and power of the Priesthood I hold as a Patriarch in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Shauntel Larsen 26 December 1982 Patriarch
Willard Smith Wray Blackfoot NW Stake

My Dear Young Sister, Shauntel Larsen: In the authority of the Holy Priesthood and as a Patriarch in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by your invitation and proper recommendation, place my hands on your head and give to you, your Patriarchal Blessing. A blessing our Heavenly Father desires for you to receive and through the authority of His Holy Priesthood made it possible for you to receive it through your faithfulness.

Shauntel, I remind you that you are a spirit child of our Heavenly Father, privileged to be in His presence in pre-earth life and there you had the opportunity to sustain the Plan of Life and Salvation as it was presented. This gave to you the right and opportunity to come to the earth and receive a body; a tabernacle to house your spirit and have the opportunity to prove yourself here, that you may attain the goals of growth and development that are necessary for you to enjoy eternal life. I bless you that you shall always cherish this blessing as the most priceless gift, given to you by your parents and our Heavenly Father; caring for it as a sacred gift, precious beyond any other thing. Keeping it clean, healthy, free from those things which would contaminate it physically or mentally. This will be a precious and priceless gift to return to your parents and our Heavenly Father.

The blessings, which you have earned in pre-earth life, though you have no recollection of them, will accrue to you here through your efforts and your faithfulness. The blessing of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints gives you the opportunity of guidance and help in all of your spiritual and temporal activities.

You have the blessing and privilege of listening to the Prophets voice. I bless you that you will always cherish this gift. He is the spokesman for our Heavenly Father here on the earth, and will give to you only those things and to all our Heavenly Father's children, that will be for their good, growth and development, to qualify them for eternal life. Likewise, your parents have this opportunity. So I bless you to counsel with them frequently. Always in times of concern, they will give to you and your life the direction that our Heavenly Father wants you to go. There will be Priesthood leaders, Bishops, Stake Presidents and those faithful sisters, placed in responsibility of

teaching, (who) will give to you guidance and direction. Accept it as one of the gifts our Heavenly Father has for His children.

I bless you, Shauntel, that you shall recognize the blessings of faithfulness in the Church and remind you that you are heir to all of the blessings that were given to Abraham and you shall be honored and recognized in the lineage of Ephraim and through this royal lineage will come eternal blessings.

I bless you that you shall rise to your full potential. The gifts and talents that you have been blessed with, you will bring to fruition through your efforts and your faithfulness. Talents which you have not yet developed

or recognized will come because of your continual effort in acquiring wisdom and knowledge. Most of all, I bless you with faith. Faith enough to accept those things which our Heavenly Father has for His children. Through this faith will come knowledge and you will be blessed with wisdom, intelligence and integrity. Then you will be able to endure all things because of your faithfulness and your devotion.



You will be privileged to take the hand of one of our Heavenly Father's choice sons in marriage. I bless you to prepare for this day and when he steps to your side give to him the strength of character that you have. Help him to maintain the sacred goals that are so important. Through your faithfulness may you qualify for the blessings of eternal marriage in one of the houses of the Lord, kneeling at a Sacred Altar, there receiving the choice gift and blessing that our Father has for His children. Not the least of which is coming forth in the Morning of the First Resurrection. I bless you that this shall be a glorious occasion for you and that you shall be honored and recognized as one of our Heavenly Fathers children, who have proven themselves faithful.

You are particularly blessed, Shauntel, to have paternal and maternal grandparents to set for you an example of integrity, of industry, of faithfulness to all things which are good. Recognize this blessing and cherish it and honor their name, their lives. The time will come when you will have children of your own and then and only then can you know the love that parents have for their children and the deep concern.

I bless you to study the life of the Savior very carefully. As near as you can, follow His footsteps. Learn to know the blessing of love for all mankind. Love enough to care and to reach out for those who are less fortunate. You will then have the opportunity of knowing joy beyond anything yet you have known when you reach out for those in need. In your selection of a vocation in life, other than that of a wife and a mother, which are the most important, I bless you to be mindful of something that will be a help to our Heavenly Father's children, keeping in the background the thought of personal gain. Remember the admonition given to all of us, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and all else will be added."

I bless your voice that it will be a clear and a sincere voice and that it will always speak the truth and that your eyes will see those things which need to be done and the beauties about you. Your ears that you may hear the cry of those who are in need. Hear those things which are important to you. I bless you that you will be a strength in the community and in the land, that you will uphold the laws of the land and seek to make it better for your children and your grandchildren and those who follow you to live in and the sacred gift of choice will always be preserved.

I bless you and send you forth to fulfill your mission, here on the earth, to reach the goals and desires that you have, praying to our Heavenly Father that He will accept this blessing as His own and do so by virtue of

the Holy Priesthood and the authority in me vested, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jonie Marie Johnson June 30, 1985 Archibald Wilson Richards Moses Lake Washington Stake Patriarch/Grandfather

Sister Jonie Marie Johnson, in the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold, I, the Patriarch of the Moses Lake Washington Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and your acquired grandfather, do lay my hands upon your head and give you a Patriarchal blessing.

Sister Jonie, you are of the seed of Joseph, and come through the loins of Ephraim who was elevated to the position of the birthright son of the twelve tribes of Israel. Through this lineage you are entitled to all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By living true and faithful to the covenants you inherit because of lineage, you will not be denied any of the blessings pertainly to exaltation.



Jonie, your parents are looking upon you with gratitude in their hearts for the life you have chosen. Now that the veil is lifted, they can see with their eyes, and hear with their ears the glories of the Father and the Son, and can, through you, partake of the glories of Eternal Life. You are of a family whose branches go over the wall into an adopted family who love and cherish you. Through them you are given instruction and example of the basic concepts of life and salvation, which are necessary for a life of refinement, respect, and reformation that the light of the gospel might radiate within you as you are called to labor with your kinsfolk and people.

I bless you that as you open your mouth and declare the gospel to your people, they will recognize the truthfulness of your words, for the day of the Lamanite is dawning and nigh at hand. They will accept the gospel and perform mighty works in His name. You have been reserved for this period of time when their hearts shall be turned unto the Father. Therefore, thrust in your sickle with your might, that you may lay in store many souls which will bring honor and glory to His name.

I bless you in your temporal affairs, that the gifts you have been abundantly blessed with shall be yours to develop. The gift of music is yours; magnify it, and in your study and mastery you shall be able to express love without language, for music is an eternal and international medium understood by all. You have been blessed with a sweet personality and winning ways which wears well with those you come in contact with. Take advantage of this gift, that it might serve you well throughout your life. Cause that it will be put to good use, as a tool in your hands in achieving the work which shall be assigned you.

Your lot shall be in leading young women. You shall be able to plant the seeds of truth in their lives, laying a firm foundation in which those seeds can sprout, grow, and be nourished by gospel principles. I bless you in your school work that you will be diligent therein. As you apply yourself in your studies, your mind will be quickened and your understanding enlarged upon, that you will excell and be recognized for your achievements. You will be looked upon as one with wisdom and knowledge: one sought after for counsel and advice.

Jonie, the adversary is real and would have you his; but inasmuch as you are true and faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ, praying night and morning, our Father in Heaven will send His angels to hedge up the way, that evil will have no influence upon you. In working with your

people, you must stand stalwart and strong, being valiant in defense of right, that evil shall find no place in your dealings with them. Guard your words, your actions, your ways, that they shall be honorable and upright, that the knowledge and exercise of the truth shall sustain you as you set the example for our Father's children.

I bless you in due time that you will have the privilege of going to the temple where you can be sealed to the one of your choice for time and all eternity, having the blessings of kingdoms, thrones, principalities, dominions and powers to accomplish the purpose of your creation. To this union will come children upon invitation for you to train, nurture, and love; for they are a heritage of our Father in Heaven, and are given with the stipulation that they be taught correct principles to mold their lives. The day will come when you must account for your stewardship as a mother and wife. I bless you as you establish a home, that it shall be a place of righteousness, wherein peace and harmony abounds; wherein the spirit of our Father in Heaven can abide. A place where your peers and associates can feel the spirit of love and companionship, and will enjoy the society of the home.

Jonie, you have been reserved to come forth at this time because of your faithfulness in the



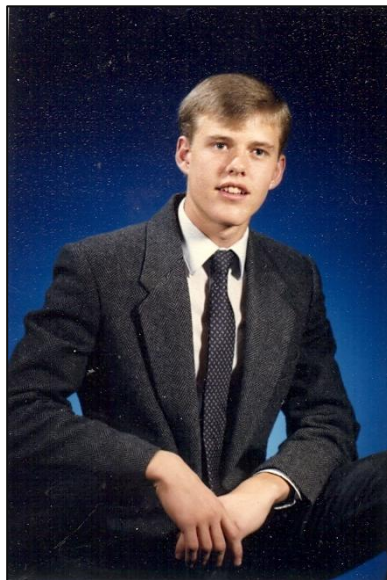
preexistence, where you were obedient to God's laws, having explored the purpose of life and salvation. Now be diligent in your second estate, that your life might bring honor and glory to Him who granted you life; to your people and yourself. Be faithful in keeping the commandments. Pay an honest tithe and respond to every call for service that will come. Magnify the gifts, talents and blessings granted you. Study the scriptures, for they testify of the divinity of the Father and Son, that you might emulate their lives. Keep the counsel of your foster parents as they help you develop into a beautiful person who is stalwart and strong, one who is pleasing in the sight of our Father in Heaven.

When your mission on earth is completed you shall be welcomed home to the bosom of a loving Father who will declare to you, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into they rest, which is life eternal." You shall be raised the morning of the First Resurrection, clothed in glory, immortality and Eternal Life, where you shall receive a crown of righteousness with your family. These blessings I seal upon you, through your faithfulness and diligence in keeping His commandments, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Stephen, David, and Becky all received their blessings on the same day from Grandpa Archibald Wilson Richards who received special permission from his stake president. Grandpa had been serving as a patriarch in the Moses Lake, Washington Stake prior to serving as a missionary with Grandma in the California, San Jose Mission. During the time of his mission, he took on "inactive" status and had to receive

permission upon returning home to give his own grandchildren their blessings.

This he did on March 1, 1987 here at our home. He first gave Stephen R. his blessing and then invited Becky to be next. He explained that he wanted Steve and David's blessings to be very distinct from one another and so he placed Becky between them. Next he gave David his blessing. Upon completion of this third blessing, he made the comment, *"I wanted both Steve and David to have their own unique blessing, but they are as much alike spiritually as they are physically and their gifts and blessings are the same."*



Stephen Richards Larsen March 1, 1987 Patriarch Archibald Wilson Richards, Grandfather Moses Lake Washington Stake

Brother Stephen Richards Larsen, in the name of Jesus Christ and by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, I, an ordained Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, exercise my right as your grandfather to give you a Patriarchal blessing and declare your lineage.

You are of the seed of Joseph through the loins of Ephraim and are entitled to all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which are of the chosen lineage of our Father in Heaven. All nations of the earth shall be blessed through their posterity.

Stephen, pattern your life after the prophets and their ways. Be a student of the scriptures. Prepare well that you will continually receive inspiration and direction; that you may perform your duties and responsibilities well as you are called to serve.

You shall be called as an ambassador of good will to the nations of the earth, to give voice to the gospel and to preach and teach the message of peace, that our Father's children will receive and enjoy the blessings therefrom. Be diligent in your mission labors. Be obedient to the rules that you might bring souls unto Him. Live worthily that you can administer the sacred ordinances of the gospel.

You have a talent or gift given unto you to heal the sick and the afflicted and for casting out devils. Many other great and marvelous works you will see under your hands as you exercise your priesthood. Magnify this priesthood and gift, which will give you power and authority when exercised in righteousness.

You are living in perilous times which shall shake the very foundation of our society. Be thou humble and believing and the Lord shall lead thee by the hand and will give you answers to your prayers. He will watch over, protect and guard you from harm or danger.

Search diligently for one of your choosing; one you can love and cherish, who will support and sustain you in your sojourn in life. One that will compliment and lift you up during periods of stress and strains of everyday living. Take her to the temple where you can be sealed for time and all eternity that the posterity, which shall come through your loins shall have Eternal Life. Be kind and considerate of your wife and children that they will have a desire to love and follow your example.

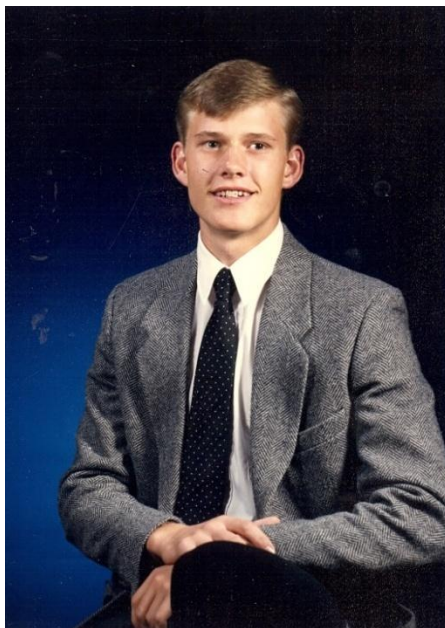
Search diligently and choose well your vocation in life, that your profession will support your way of life and the priesthood you bear. Select a

vocation you can enjoy and which is in demand in the market place, but will harmonize with the principles you have been taught from your youth.

Choose good friends that will support and sustain you throughout life for there are those in the world today who would tear you down and make light of things you hold sacred and dear. Avoid them.

Give of your time, talents and energy willingly. Build the kingdom for it is through service that you grow and develop to be stalwart and strong in the kingdom. You will be taught at the feet of the prophet, having the privilege of receiving inspiration and revelation to attend the work you are called to do.

Be humble and prayerful in all your dealings with all of your Father in Heaven's children and with your peers, admonishing them to do right; setting a proper example before them. Avoid being puffed up or arrogant; give of yourself and your love, for love softens the hardest hearts.



The Lord has great things in store for you if you are true and faithful to your covenants. You will be crowned from on high, that you might rule and reign in your own dominion after being caught up to meet Him. These blessings I seal upon you, through your faithfulness, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**David Allan Larsen March 1, 1987 Patriarch
Archibald Wilson Richards/Grandfather
Moses Lake Washington Stake**

Brother David Allan Larsen, in the name of Jesus Christ and by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, I, your grandfather, an ordained

Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, lay my hands upon your head and declare your lineage and give you a Patriarchal Blessing.

You are a chosen son of our Father in Heaven, having proven yourself in the pre-existence. Because of your faith and diligence there, you have been granted the privilege of coming into this world of goodly parents, through the lineage of Joseph who was sold into Egypt, through the loins of his son Ephraim, who received the birthright of the twelve tribes of Israel. Brother Larsen, this is a great blessing, to be numbered among this tribe, inasmuch as the nations of the earth shall be blessed through his posterity. Therefore, great demands will be placed upon you as a member of this lineal descent. Be true and faithful and magnify your calling, as your ancestors did before you; even as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob whom the Lord loveth. You, too, are loved of the Lord as they were in their time.

The day will come when you will be granted the Melchizedek Priesthood, and because of your obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel, and honoring your calling in the Aaronic Priesthood, you will receive, under the hands of legal representatives, the authority and power to act in His name. You will be blessed with the power to command in the name of Jesus Christ. You will see great miracles, signs and wonders performed before your eyes and under your hands, if you will honor and respect that great power in the service of others.

I bless you that your brain and intellect will function properly, and you will continually strive to reach your God-given potential. Take the time required to rise above mediocrity. If you do this, people will seek you out for your counsel and advice. Prepare yourself that you will excel in spiritual matters, that you will also be a spiritual leader.

You are blessed with the gift of healing, for you will be able to lay your hands upon those who are sick and afflicted, and strength will flow into them from the blessings pronounced upon their heads. Acknowledge the source of this power, and recognize that it is given that all may be benefited thereby. You will see miracles performed under your hands.

In your quest for a profession, choose one which is honorable and upright; one which will lift and build people, and instill in their hearts a desire to live righteously, as you serve them professionally.

I bless you that in due time a young lady will present herself to you which will be of your choosing, that will support and sustain you in fulfilling your life's mission. One that will honor your priesthood and uphold the gospel principles as you dedicate your time and talents to the Lord. Solemnize your marriage in the House of the Lord, where you can be sealed for all eternity. Set in order all things which are necessary for exaltation and a harmonious life together.

You are living in a world of trial and tribulation, one in which Satan is running rampant. I bless you with a strong desire to be obedient to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel. So long as you are obedient in keeping His commandments, the adversary will have no power over you. The heavens will shake, and Lucifer will tremble in your presence, and you can command and he must obey.

Beware of false pride. Be meek and humble, and the Lord thy God will lead thee by the hand. Give willingly of your time and talents. Support and sustain those who are called in authority over you. Honor your father and mother as they direct your life for good, and you will not be found wanting, but will be rewarded in all things.

I bless you in your temporal affairs, that you will have sufficient to provide for those depending upon you for food, clothing, shelter and some of the good things of life; that your earthly existence will be a joy to you and yours.

Forsake those who would tear you down and make light of sacred things. Turn from them, that they will have no influence in your life. Satan desires to have you, for he recognizes in you the power which will challenge his kingdom and authority. Be faithful and careful in all that you say and do, that he will not enter in and destroy you.

As you are called to give of your time and talents, do so willingly, and obstacles will be made stepping stones to great things in your life. Be kind and considerate of the feelings of others, that they might respond without criticism to your leadership.

David the Lord is pleased with you, and will reward you for your obedience in His service with a crown of righteousness; and you shall rise with the just on the Morning of the First Resurrection.

Rebecca Larsen March 1, 1987 Archibald Wilson Richards Moses Lake Washington Stake Patriarch/Grandfather

Sister Rebecca Larsen, in the name of Jesus Christ and by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, I as your grandfather, and as an ordained Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, do respond to your request for a Patriarchal blessing.

Rebecca, your Father in Heaven is pleased with your life thus far, and you are one of his chosen

daughters, having been obedient in the pre-existence and during your sojourn here in life. Because of your faithfulness you have been assigned to come forth through the seed of Joseph, of the loins of Ephraim, who obtained the birthright of the twelve tribes. You are to look to the tribe for your blessings, even the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the faithful since the world began.

I bless you that you will be an instrument in His hands in bringing many souls unto Him. Through your many talents and abilities, you will play an important role in influencing and changing the

lives of many of the sisters of the Church. You will be called upon to perform many tasks of great worth unto the kingdom.

Treasure up in your mind the gifts of the Spirit, and prepare all needful things which will make you equal to the tasks which will be required at your hand. Don't overlook the weightier matters of the law which are essential for your exaltation, for the saving principles of the gospel bring life Eternal.

I bless you with an insight into things as they are, and a discernment of spirits; that through your faithfulness you will be able to recognize the temptations of the evil one and be able to stand valiant and strong at the last days. He will not have power over you, nor bring you down into captivity as long as you keep the commandments of the Lord.

You shall be blessed in your school work that your mind will be alert and you will be able to understand and retain those things which will prepare you for life. Your knowledge can strengthen you in your role as a leader. Although



academic learning is essential in life, so that your life will be balanced, pray always for an understanding of the scriptures, for they are given for your edification, instruction and your salvation. His Spirit will bless you with the peaceable things of this world.

You will be blessed in choosing one to be your eternal companion. One who will compliment you in life and be kind and considerate of your needs. You will be a source of inspiration to your beloved and help him fill his responsibilities as father, husband, and head of the home. One who will take you to the temple where you will be sealed for time and eternity, with a covenant and promise, if you will keep all the laws, rights and ordinances pertaining to Eternal Life, that you will have your seed forever.

Your family will look upon you as an elect lady and call your name blessed.

Seek for good friends which will lift you up and help you to be what your Father in Heaven wants you to be. Avoid those who would tear you down and make your life less than it could be. Always follow the admonition of your earthly, as well as your Heavenly parents, for they are set as beacons to keep you from the trials, tribulations and pitfalls of life.

Develop and magnify the talents and gifts you have been blessed with, that they can be a joy to the church in general as well as you individually, that you might fulfill your purposes here in life.

You have been called in the pre-existence and blessed with the ability to search out your progenitors and to bring salvation to their souls and free them from these many years of bondage. Keep a record of your ancestry and of

their spiritual achievements, that a record might be kept which is worthy of all acceptance.

I admonish you to be prayerful and humble. Beware of false pride. Keep the commandments and if you do this you will receive a crown of righteousness and will rule and reign over a righteous posterity eternally. By virtue of my calling and priesthood, I bless you that you will be raised on the Morning of the First Resurrection, clothed with glory, immortality and Eternal life. These blessings I seal upon you, through your faithfulness, and in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**John Berkeley Larsen 8-Dec-1991 Patriarch
Eterick Bruce Evans Blackfoot
Idaho Northwest Stake**



Brother John Berkeley Larsen, by the authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold, I lay my hands upon your head, as a Patriarch in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, to give unto you your Patriarchal Blessing. This blessing is an enumeration of some of the blessings, the promises, and the gifts that our

Heavenly Father has in store for you. All these blessings will be pronounced upon your head by virtue of the faithfulness that you demonstrate as you go through your life, and through keeping of the Covenants and promises which you will make with your Heavenly Father.

You are a fortunate and blessed individual to be of the lineage that you are. To have had the opportunity to come into this home and this family, and enjoy the blessings that you have thus far. One evidence of the Love that our Heavenly Father has for you, is the blessings and teachings that you have received to enable you

to go forth and fill the opportunities, and the responsibilities, that are yours in this life.

I bless you that as you go through life, you may have the Spirit of discernment to be shed upon you, that you may be able to understand and give counsel to those that you meet with, and whom it is your privilege to administer to and to give direction in their lives.

I bless you with the blessing of health and strength sufficient to perform your labors. This blessing will be realized, in part, by your adherence to the Lords Law of Health, the Word of Wisdom. He will bless you richly with the health and strength that you need to perform His labors.

I bless you that you may have the guidance and direction of His Spirit as you go through your life. As temptations present themselves to you, no matter how subtle they may be, you may use this Spirit of discernment to understand them, and to understand ways of avoiding and overcoming the temptations that will come to you. By so doing you will gain strength, you will gain purpose in life, and experience to help you perform the labors that are yours to do.

I bless you that as you go through life you may acquire a great deal of knowledge, that your mind may be filled, that you may learn of the knowledge and intelligence of our Heavenly Father as He created this earth, and that you may gain some measure of understanding of your opportunities, and the future that lies ahead of you. I counsel you as you gain this knowledge, to be careful of what you put into your mind, for it is a Temple of our Heavenly Father and should be treated as such.

I bless you that you may teach the principles of the Gospel to peoples of many diverse backgrounds, that you might be able to be a servant in the hands of the Lord wherever you go

in your life. Accept readily the calls that come to you. Seek for the guidance and direction of His Spirit to fill these calls to the best of your ability. You will be given the guidance that you need. You will be given the direction in your life as you make preparations, both before you receive your calls, and subsequent to the calls that will come to you.

I bless you that you may know of your lineage in the House of Israel. You are of the lineage of Ephraim, and as a descendant of the House of Ephraim you fall heir to the same blessings as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You will have the privilege of teaching the Gospel, both by word of mouth and by example, to the other members of the Tribes of Israel throughout the earth, that you might be able to serve as a descendant of Ephraim in being the one who seeks out and finds these other members.

I bless you that you might have the opportunity of holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, and that through faithfully filling the offices and callings in this Priesthood, you will be able to bring comfort and joy, and health, and strength, to those upon whom you lay your hands.

I bless you that through honoring this Priesthood, you may have the privilege of going to the Temple to make further Covenants there with our Heavenly Father, and to gain an Endowment of knowledge and wisdom that He has for you there, and to make Covenants with Him that will strengthen you in this life, and give you understanding that you need as you progress on into eternity. I bless you that as you go through life and its experiences, you might be able to look forward with great anticipation to that day, and it will be a rich experience for you, that you might know of the love, and feel of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father while you are there in the Temple.

I bless you that through careful adherence to the promptings of the Spirit, you may be protected as you go through life. You may be guarded and protected, and you may have every blessing and gift realized in your behalf that our Heavenly Father has in store for you. Study the Scriptures, for therein you will find the answers to many of the gifts that our Heavenly Father has for us, and as these come to you, and you realize that they are part of your life, give thanks to your Heavenly Father for the direction and gifts that He has given unto you.

I bless you with all these blessings, and send you forth to find joy and satisfaction in the experiences of life, and in the labors of your hands, counseling you to be faithful and diligent in living the Gospel, that you may realize all these things.

I seal you up to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, to meet your family members and those with whom you have made Covenants of friendship throughout this life. I do so by virtue of the Priesthood that I hold, and in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Michael Andrew Larsen January 30, 1994
Patriarch Eterick Bruce Evans Blackfoot
Northwest Stake

Brother Michael Andrew Larsen, by the authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold, I lay my hands upon your head to give unto you a Patriarchal blessing to help you to become acquainted with promises and blessings that are incumbent in your life as you live the Gospel. These blessings will all be predicated upon the principle of your faithfully living of the Gospel and in the due time of our Heavenly Father as you are experienced and have demonstrated your faith.

You are a blessed individual. You are blessed in that you have accepted the Gospel and made the

Covenants that you have at this point in your life. As you honor these Covenants, you will be strengthened and you will have a desire to make further Covenants which will enrich your life, which will open your knowledge to the plan of the Gospel and how it can enrich your own life and the lives of those whom it may be your privilege to touch and to work amongst and to be an example to.

There are people in this world who will be influenced by your behavior, that you may never meet or that you may never know personally but by the example which you shall live and the words that you shall write and the thoughts which you shall express. You shall be a profound influence in their lives.

I bless you that as you go forth seeking to do the works of the Lord that you shall be prospered, that you shall be protected, and that you shall have the strength and the endurance to perform the labors that shall be given to you. There are opportunities for service. There are opportunities for leadership. There are opportunities for you to give counsel to your fellowmen. All these things await you in your life to come as you listen to your priesthood leaders, to your parents and those in your family who have had prior experience and weigh and confirm their counsel by the direction of the Holy Ghost. Your knowledge and understanding shall grow and you shall become one who is sought after for counsel. You shall have the confirmation of the Spirit to be with you in decisions which you shall make in your own life; that they might be done in wisdom and for your benefit.

I bless you as you meet the challenges in life that you may see the good in them, that you may gain experience from them and that you may not let them daunt you in your pursuit of excellence in your activities. I bless you that you may seek

things of a cultural nature that you may be enriched and that you may enrich others as well.

I bless you that you may have the opportunity of seeking out those of the House of Israel who are scattered throughout the earth and that you may be directed by the Spirit in those whom you should approach and expose them to the Gospel message.

I bless you that you may know your lineage in the House of Israel to be one of the sons of Ephraim. A rich blessing and a choice blessing and in your behalf there are many things awaiting you as one of the sons of Ephraim which you shall see come to pass in your lifetime. I bless you as you study the scriptures that you will comprehend what this blessing and privilege may hold in store for you.

I bless you that you may have the privilege of going to the House of the Lord to receive an Endowment of knowledge there which is held in store for you and as you honor the covenants that you will make there, that you might have the privilege of also returning to His House and making Covenants with one of our Heavenly Father's daughters to form a home and a union here on the earth that can be choice above all else in your life, a union which will bring you joy immeasurable.

I bless you as you prepare for that day that there may come into your mind from time to time these thoughts, and promises and blessings which you have been given this day to help you to resist the temptations of the adversary for he knows you and he would thwart the plan of our

Heavenly Father. Be humble in your pursuits. Seek direction from your Priesthood leaders. Seek often for the counsel and the blessings and the strength of our Heavenly Father.

I bless you that you may find life a joyous experience. That there may be many times in your life when you shall be filled with rejoicing with the goodness of life and the opportunities that are yours in being here in this world. All these blessings are pronounced upon your head this day by virtue of the Priesthood that I hold, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.



**Paul Archibald Larsen 13
November 1994**

**Patriarch: Eterick Bruce
Evans Blackfoot NW
Stake**

Brother Paul Archibald Larsen, by the authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold, I lay my hands upon your head to give unto you, at your request, a Patriarchal Blessing, and to pronounce your lineage in the House of Israel.

I bless you that as you go through the experiences of life, that you may recognize the hand of our Heavenly Father in your life as you experience the Testimony of the Spirit, in the things that you shall do and in that which you shall study.

I bless you that you shall come to recognize your place in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father here upon the earth, as a valuable, and an important place, as you recognize that you are of a choice generation. You have particular abilities which have been expressed this day, which will suit you

to perform the labors that our Heavenly Father has for you here in your period of mortality.

I bless you that you might continue to be faithful in living the Gospel. I bless you that you might continue to seek for good companions to strengthen you, and that you might, in turn, strengthen them, recognizing that as you are in the company of good companions and holders of the Priesthood, that temptation will flee from you, and you might have the blessings which you seek to keep your life in the manner, and in the direction, of truth and virtue.

I bless you that these experiences, that of friendship and the association of good friends, may be paramount in your mind, and that you may remember them so that during those times when you are by yourself, you may have the reinforcement of these memories to strengthen you and keep you observing the principles of the Gospel.

I bless you that your Testimony may grow, that as you continue to study the scriptures and listen to the words of counsel from your Priesthood leaders, and other leaders in the Church, that your knowledge will grow, and as your knowledge grows your Testimony will be strengthened, and as you express your Testimony to those within the sound of your voice it may become firm and strong, and a powerful thing in your life.

I bless you that you may ever reach out to other children of our Heavenly Father who seek for friendship, and who seek for companionship of one who is an example and who would live the Gospel.

I bless you that you might go forth continuing to enjoy the experiences which you have, and to extend them into your life as you pursue further education, and as you pursue the opportunities of travel which shall be yours in your lifetime.

I bless you as you observe and live the Gospel that you may be protected, that you may be watched over. I bless you that you may have the ability to see circumstances, or to be aware of situations, which might cause harm to yourself or to those with whom you travel, and that as you listen to the Spirit you will be able to take appropriate action to avoid harm or danger coming to you.



I bless you as you honor the Priesthood, that you might find rich blessings flow into your life, and as you prepare yourself for the Priesthood of Melchizedek, you shall receive the power, and the opportunity, through righteous exercise of the Priesthood, to perform miracles in behalf of your fellowmen by calling upon that power given from your Heavenly Father at that time.

I bless you that you may have the privilege of testifying of the truthfulness of the Gospel, that this may be done in humility, but in power, and I bless you as you go forth and embark on these labors of your life, that you might recognize that they come in part, in response to your lineage as a member of the House of Israel, and especially of the Tribe of Ephraim who hold the keys to great blessings at this time in the world's history. You shall be the partaker of some of these opportunities in your lifetime.

I bless you that as you are careful with your means and observe the laws of tithing and offerings, that you may be blessed and

prospered. I bless you that as you continue the habits, and traits, and characteristics which have been spoken of this day, that you might see your life blossom and flower, and see joy and happiness come into the lives of others by the gifts that you shall extend unto them.

I bless you that you may have the opportunity of leading and directing people, and giving counsel to them in righteousness. I bless you that you might have patience with those whom you counsel, recognizing that they have their agency, but through your patience you may be able to help and direct people to bring their lives in order.

I bless you that you might go through the experiences of life, preparing yourself for the opportunity of an Endowment of knowledge in the Temple of our Heavenly Father, and that you might prepare yourself for establishing a home in righteousness here on the earth with one of His valiant daughters. I bless you with patience as you seek for her. I bless you that you may be perceptive to the promptings of the Spirit.

I bless you that you may be kind, that you may extend love to your fellowmen, and especially to your family members, and to those choice spirits who shall come into your home. You shall have the opportunity of having leaders of men come into your home, and receive there the lessons of life which you shall teach them.

I bless you that you might remember, this day, the things which you have been told, and the love which you have felt from your family members, and the Spirit which has touched your life. I pronounce all these blessings upon your

head, to be recognized in the due time of our Heavenly Father, as you have prepared yourself for them and made it possible for Him to bless you, and I do so by the Priesthood authority which I have and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Timothy James Larsen January 10, 1999

**Patriarch Eterick Bruce Evans Blackfoot, Idaho
North West Stake**

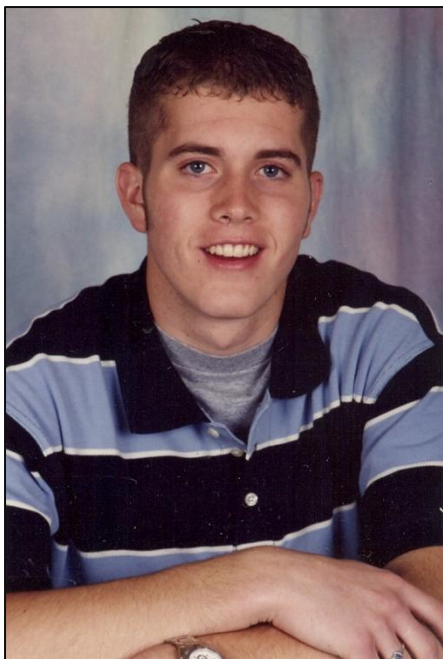
Brother Timothy James Larsen, by the power of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold, I lay my hands upon your head to give unto you a

Patriarchal Blessing. I bless you that you may enjoy the words of this blessing given from our Heavenly Father, to you one of His sons, and rejoice as you mature in years and experiences, and recognize that He knows you, and is aware of you, and is concerned for your welfare.

I bless you that you might cherish the principle of agency which has been given to you, that you might plead unto your Heavenly Father for the guidance and direction that you need in your life, but that you

might not be hesitant in exercising your gift of agency to make wise and intelligent choices. You shall see your mind grow with age. You shall have your catalog of experiences multiplied many times, and shall gain the experience you need to be a teacher who can explain the principles of the Gospel and inspire people to want to live them.

I bless you that you will be one who will enjoy life and that you will find great satisfaction in the labors of your life and your experiences and in the people that you shall meet. I bless you that



you shall be a friend to many, that many shall count your friendship and acquaintance as a choice and precious thing.

I bless you with the knowledge of your lineage in the House of Israel to be a descendant of Ephraim, an inheritor of the blessings promised unto Ephraim, and you shall participate in the gathering of the House of Israel, and in the preparation of the earth for the return of the Savior.

I bless you that you may call upon the Power of the Priesthood as you go through your life, to give blessings upon the request of those who need them, recognizing that the power that is within you, is that of our Heavenly Father given to His worthy servants. I bless you that you may have the privilege of pronouncing blessings of healing, of comfort, and of pronouncing blessings to people that shall settle their minds.

You shall have the privilege of living upon the earth at a time when there shall be much commotion, and shall be many things of an uncertain nature going on around you. I bless you with the gift of understanding, that as you remember the lessons which have been taught in the Scriptures, and which you have learned in your life, you shall be able to bring stability to many situations. You shall be able to calm men's minds and inspire confidence in the hearts of people.

I bless you that you may be a leader amongst your fellowmen; that you may be humble in your callings, but that you may have the power to direct the lives of our Heavenly Father's children, in many capacities, as you go through your life.

I bless you with a blessing of health and strength. I bless you that you may have the wisdom to recognize temptation when it presents itself. I bless you that you may have the wisdom to nourish and care for your body, and your spirit as

well, that you may nurture both; that you might be able to fill the measure of your creation and accomplish the things which it is your privilege to do here in mortality.

You shall have the privilege of walking upon the earth in Holy Places, and of being in places where the Spirit is manifest. I bless you that you may recognize this, and that you may recognize the significance of your experiences, that you may rejoice in them and in the opportunity that it brings to you.

I bless you that you may have the privilege of making Covenants with our Heavenly Father in His House. I bless you with the patience to await the process, whereby, you may find a companion for the eternities, and that you might rejoice in her association when you do so. I bless you that as you honor the Covenants that you make with her, that your home shall be a place of refuge, and of joy and delight to all who shall come there.

You are one of our Heavenly Father's choice sons. You have the privilege of being here upon the earth at a time when the Gospel is here and there is the opportunity for great good. I bless you that as you are earnestly engaged in good causes, that you shall find your life prospered, and the lives of your brothers and sisters blessed.

These blessings shall come to pass as our Heavenly Father sees fit to implement them in your life, with many others unspoken which shall come, not only in this life, but in the eternities to come. I bless you that you may humbly await their coming into your life, and that you may rejoice in who you are, and I pronounce these blessings upon your head, this day, by virtue of the Priesthood that I hold and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**SaraKay Larsen 11 September 2005 Patriarch
Eterick Bruce Evans Blackfoot Northwest Stake**

Sister SaraKay Larsen, by the power of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, I lay my hands upon your head to give unto you a patriarchal blessing. I bless you that your life shall continue to be an example to your friends, to your family, and in due time to your children and grandchildren. I bless you that you shall rejoice all the days of your life for the membership that you hold in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I bless you that as you grow in maturity that you might always have a desire, wherever you are in the earth, to attend meetings and enjoy the spirit and fellowship of the saints that shall be in there.

It shall be your privilege to see many peoples of the nations of the earth. It shall be your privilege to wield an influence for good in their lives and to gain knowledge, understanding and testimony to yourself from the people that you shall come to meet. You shall become a person of influence, one who is sought for counsel, and for gentle friendship and listening. You have a gift of being able to listen and have empathy for those around you. I bless you that you might cherish this gift and hold it sacred and hold the confidences sacred that people shall share with you.



I bless you, that in due time, you shall have the privilege to go to the House of the Lord and receive an endowment of knowledge and understanding that awaits you there, and that you might also make covenants with one of the sons of our Heavenly Father who is a worthy holder of the priesthood who will honor you and will join with you in bringing spirits into the earth that you shall nurture and teach and cherish. In due time you shall stand at the head of a large family. You shall be instrumental in providing mortal tabernacles for spirits who await to come to this earth to perform a mighty work to which they have been foreordained.

You shall have part in the preparation of the

earth for the return of the Savior through your lineage in the house of Israel as one of the daughters of Ephraim. You shall have part in events in the world that shall be of great importance. You shall see your life preserved. You shall see your footsteps guided and directed by the spirit. You shall also see the adversary tempting you and trying you, but through all of these things, as you rely on the promptings of the Holy Ghost, the testimony that you have and the teachings that you have been given, you will be able to recognize what temptation is and to avoid it, and to teach those around you avoid it as well.

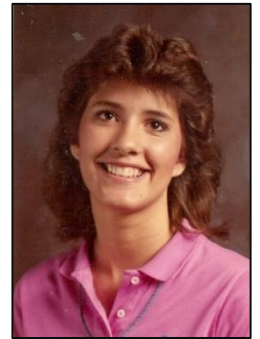
I bless you that you shall grow through your experiences. I bless you that you shall have the blessings of our Heavenly Father to be upon you that you might live the full measure of your days of mortal probation enjoying life, both blessing and being blessed by this mortal experience that shall be yours. I bless you that you may have a blessing of health and strength. I bless you that you may have the blessings of materiel wealth that you stand in need of, which will be for your good and benefit, and that you might be able to teach others in your acquaintance of the reality of

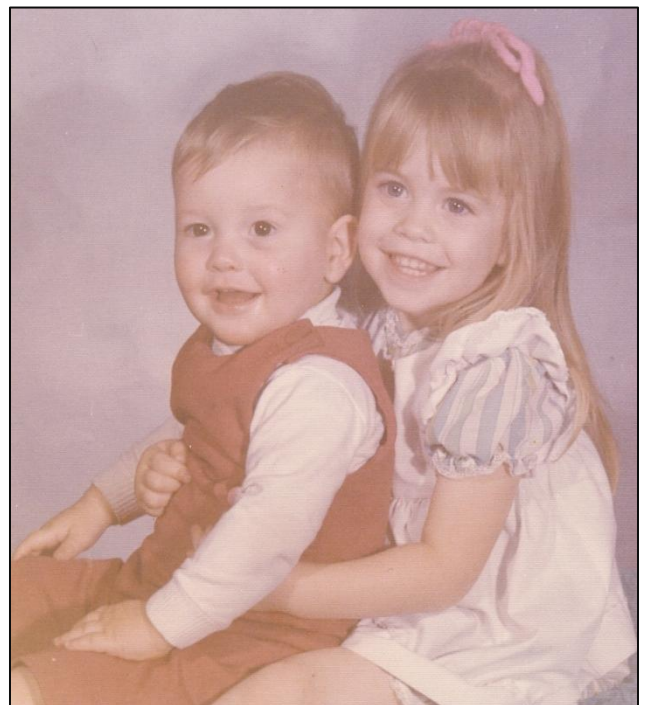
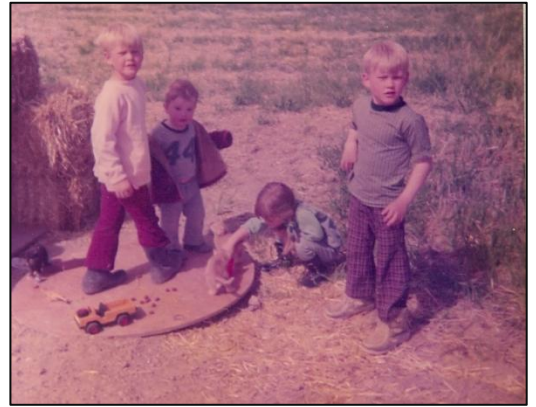
blessings that paying tithes and offerings has brought into your life and will bring into theirs.

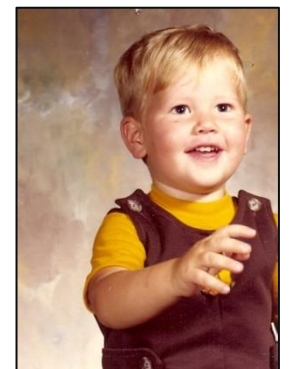
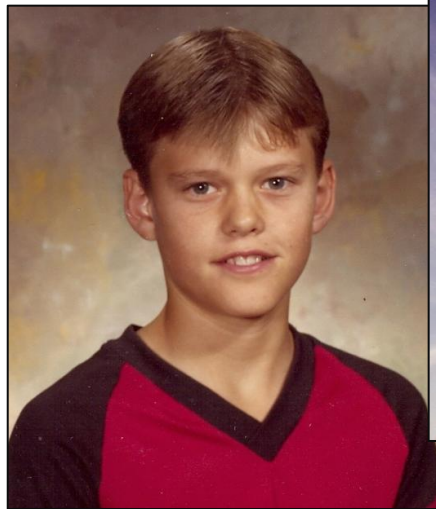
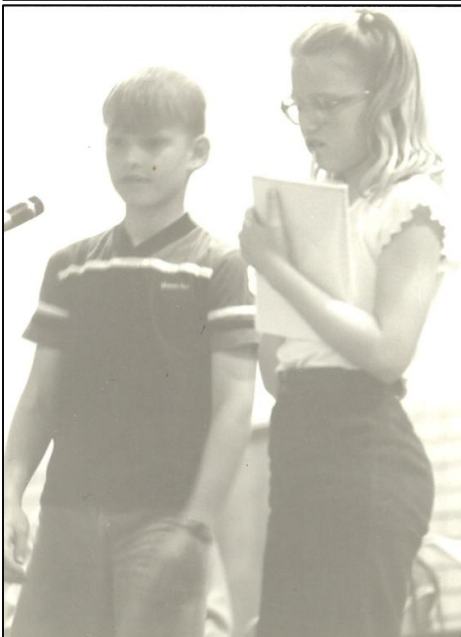
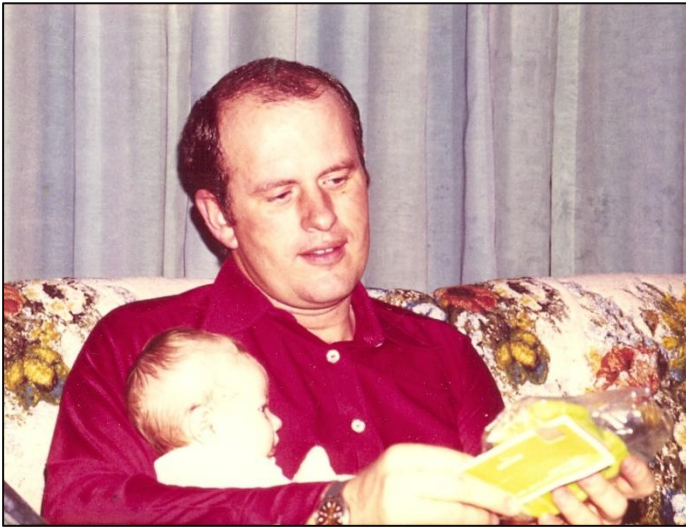
You have the privilege of living here on the earth in troubled times, and a greater privilege of the companionship of the spirit and the testimony that you have. Through all of these things you shall triumph, you shall be blessed, and you shall lift the lives of others. These blessings are given to you with an admonition to rejoice in who you are, in the mortal lineage that you come from, and in the opportunity for life that is yours. I pronounce them this day by virtue of the priesthood that I hold and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Section V: Additional Pictures









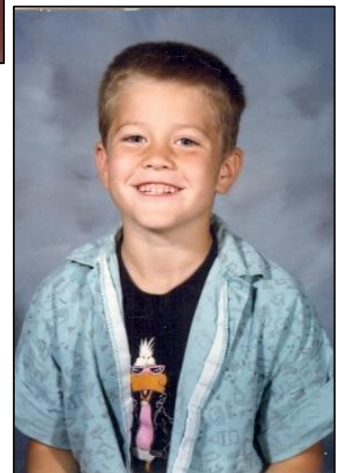
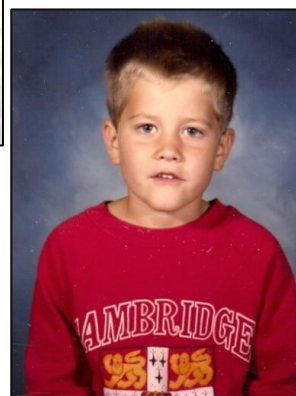
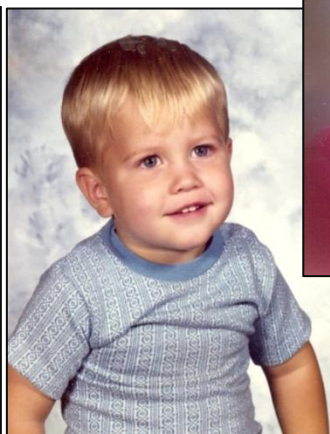


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2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> James Berkeley Larsen and Florence Bywater Tingey, Alfred Earnest Francis Elswood and Josephine Katherine Bolander Allan Franklin Larsen Barbara Grace Elswood
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allan and Barbara as newlyweds(1942) Cast of “Barretts of Wimpole Street”(1942)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barbara with baby Stephen (1943) Stephen (1944) Stephen with Grandma Larsen Stephen with Grandpa Larsen
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen and Gary Gary and Stephen (1945) Stephen, Gary, and Stafford in cowboy outfits Barbara sewedfor them
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allan F. Larsen family group at Wapello farm (1948-49) Gary and Stephen sledding Stephen (1949)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School pictures of Stephen Allan with sons Gary, Staff, and Stephen (1948) First home on newly purchased Taber farm Gary and Stephen
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen, Gary, Stafford, Jeanie, and Mark all dressed up and looking sharp! New home at 848 Taber Road, Moreland Idaho
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J. Berkeley Larsen family group picture (1957)
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen (circa. 1957) Stephen (circa. 1960)
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First day of school(circa. 1960) Stephen, Gary, Stafford, Jeanie, and Mark

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen in high school band uniform Stephen performing a trumpet solo (1962)
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larsen family (1962)
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larsen family (1960)
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen(1963) Proud 1962 Snake River High School graduate
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newly called and clothed missionary (1963)
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elders Larsen and Vernon in Central British Mission/ Best of friends!
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newspaper article highlighting Elders Larsen and Vernon in England
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stafford, Gary, and Stephen (1967) Steve’s missionary converts:Anne and Gordon Dawe
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan Richards Larsen Ricks College Woman of the Year 1966
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan (1946) Arch and Ilene (1943) Arch and Ilene on their wedding day in Salt Lake City (May 5, 1942)
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan (1946) Kathy and Susan (circa 1948)
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan in Enterprise, Utah (1949) Ilene with daughters Susan and Kathy (1946) Kathy, Nathan, and Susan (1949)
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan (1948) Ilene with Susan, Charles, Kathy, and Nathan in Belle Fourche South Dakota (1953)
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathy, Ilene with Charles in arms, Susan and Nathan at ranch in Aladdin, Wyoming (1952) Charles (1953)
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathy and Susan in front of ranch house (1953)

28	– Nate, Ilene with Charles and Susan at ranch (1952)
30	– Susan's third grade class picture with Mrs. Bates in Shelley, Idaho(fall of 54)
31	– Arch and Ilene (circa 1948)
32	– Deniece (1957) – Richards family group (1956) in Shelley home on Milton Avenue
33	– Susan's fourth grade class with Hazel Stewart(fall of 1955) – Susan's sixth grade class with Mrs. Baird (fall of 1957)
34	– Susan's fifth grade class with Evelyn Cook (fall of 1956) – Susan and friends (1956) – Susan's seventh grade class with Mr. Longhurst (fall of 1958)
35	– Abby and Nathan Oscar Robinson (circa 1940) – Abby and Joseph Gooch (1965)
36	– Grandma Abby Gooch with children and grandchildren (1958)
37	– Grandpa Richards giving Kathy a ride on one of his big workhorses(circa 1945)
38	– Clara Olive Bacon and John Charles Richards on wedding day (November 6, 1907)
39	– Clara Olive Bacon Richards (1965)
40	– Family group of John and Clara's family (circa 1940)
41	– Kathy milking cow with Susan, and cousins Elaina and Loie looking on (1958 Shelley, Idaho) – Lisa (1962)
42	– Archibald Wilson Richards (circa 1950's)
43	– Susan (1963) – Richards new home (1963)
44	– Richards family group (1966)
45	– Louise Taysom, Renee Thomas, Annette Barker, Carol Goble, and Jane Crookston, (1963)

46	– Susan as cheerleader (1962) – John Nale (1963)
47	– Joe Cannon (1962) – High school boyfriends: Craig Malcom, Gene Petty, Dean Neilson (1963)Susan (1964)
48	– Susan as cheerleader (1963)
49	– Susan at Girls State (summer of 1963)
50	– Mom and Dad visit Susan at inauguration at Girl's State (1963) – Susan sworn in by Idaho's Governor Smylie (1963)
51	– Graduate Susan (1964)
52	– Shelley Stake Presidency (circa 1964) – Old Shelley LDS Tabernacle (1964)
53	– Martin Luther King Jr. (1967) – President John F. Kennedy (1962)
54	– Abby K. Gooch (circa 1957)
55	– Ilene Robinson (circa 1938)
56	– Richards family with Grandma Richards (1965) – Susan as Governor of Girl's State (1964)
57	– Girl's State head table (1964) – Girl's State Inauguration (1964)
58	– Kathy and Dick Bennion's wedding (August 28, 1964) – Susan at Ricks College (1965)
59	– Susan at Ricks (1965) – Susan's campaign picture for student body elections (1965)
60	– Susan as Miss Ricks College (1965)
61	– Stephen and Susan on their wedding day, March 4, 1966
62	– Stephen (1965) – Susan (1965)
63	– Ricks College student body officers for 1965-1966 – Steve and Susan's wedding day at Idaho Falls Temple (March 4, 1966)

64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Susan with her wedding attendants – Outside of temple following marriage ceremony – Wedding day
65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Couple with their parents at the wedding reception in Shelley, Idaho (March 4, 1966) – Steve and his best man, his brother Stafford
66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Susan crowned Ricks College “Woman of the Year” (1966) – Susan receives her Associates degree from Ricks College (spring 1966)
67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Newlywed couple at their Rexburg, Idaho apartment – Labor house on Allan’s farm
68	– Allan Larsen Family group (1968)
69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Barbara (circa 1960) – Allan in Idaho Legislature (1970’s)
70	– Steve and Sue’s first apartment in Provo, Utah (1966)
71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gary and Linda Larsen married July 1, 1966 – Stephani 1967
72	– Stephani 1967
73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stephani and Aunt Karen at Taber Road home (1967) – Stephani at Provo (1967)
74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stephani at nine months – Gordon and Anne Dawe Family
75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Susan crowns 1967 “Woman of the Year” – Stephani with Deniece at a Thanksgiving get-together in Utah (1967)
76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Steve on grain combine on Allan’s farm (1967) – Stephani at one year in Provo
77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Apartment building that Steve and Sue managed while Steve attended BYU 1967-1971 – Larsen family (1968)
78	– Family group at Shauntel’s birth

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – (1967) – Shauntel (1968) – Charles (1970)
79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Shauntel at nine months – Susan and Stephani at Lagoon (1968) – Steve with Shauntel(1967)
80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sue, Stephani and baby Shauntel (1967) – Stephen receives Bachelor’s Degree from BYU on March 29, 1969
81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Shauntel at one year (1968) – Steve with his girls (1968)
82	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stephani (1968) – Shauntel and Stephani (1970)
83	– Kathy with Shauntel (1968)
84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stephani (1969) – Nathan and Maureen marry on April 2, 1970 in Salt Lake City
85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Steve and Sue with new twins (1970) – Twin sons, Stephen and David (1970)
86	– Twins at eight months (1971)
87	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Family at summer party in Provo (1970) – Richards family group (1970)
88	– Family group at twin’s blessing in Moreland, Idaho (1970)
89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MBA associates and their wives at lodge at Sundance, Utah (1970) – Steve graduates with MBA from BYU (1971)
90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Twins (1971) – Family group (1970)
91	– Steve’s resume (1970)
93	– Jeanie and Scott Gentry marry on September 3, 1971
94	– Kathy Wakefield and Stafford marry on July 30, 1971
95	– Steve with twins, Stephen and David (1971)

96	– Becky in Buhl (1972)
	– Grandpa Richards with Becky (1972)
97	– Stephen with Becky at Christmas of 1972
	– Becky at one year (1973)
98	– Becky with Susan at ward party in Sandy, Utah
99	– Four kids and President Tenny's daughter (1973)
100	– Steve w/ Bp. Herb Williams and Bill Johnson
	– Family group (1973)
101	– Family home in Sandy Utah on Kelsh Drive
	– Steve and Susan Sandy, Utah (1973)
	– Five little munchkins (1973)
102	– Five kids in wagon plus one neighbor boy
	– Susan (YW President) and Steve at Girls Camp summer of 1973
103	– On a windy day at home in Taber, Idaho(August of 1973)
	– Having lots of fun at family home in Taber (1973)
104	– All dressed up and ready for Church at Barbara and Allans (1973)
105	– More fun!
	– Family group (1972)
	– Stephani starts first grade (1973)
106	– Three favorite Mexicans:Ludie, Manuel Travino, and Elias (circa 1975-6)
	– Family performing @ annual Larsen Christmas program (1973)
	– Family group (1973)
107	– David (1973)
	– John (1974)
	– Family group (1974)
108	– Mark and Rita married on July 11, 1975
	– Charles and Brenda married on

	April 18, 1975
	– Deniece and Don married June 27, 1975
	– Extended family at Mark and Rita's reception in Moreland
109	– Extended Arch and Ilene Richards family (1974)
110	– Family (1975)
	– Bishop Larsen takes a power nap
111	– Moreland Second Ward bishopric: Darlo Bingham, Steve, and Gary Love (1975)
112	– School pictures (fall 1975)
113	– Kids on front steps of home (1977)
	– Becky and John (1975)
114	– Becky (1976)
	– Kids singing "Let's Got Fly A Kite" in school talent show (1977)
	– John with Steve (1976)
115	– Family group at Idaho Falls Temple grounds (1977)
	– Relaxing on front lawn at farm (summer of 1977)
116	– John (1977)
	– Steve with kids (summer of 1977)
	– Mike @ one and two years of age(1977-8)
117	– Building a snowman (circa 1977-78)
	– Allan in Idaho State Legislature (1977)
118	– Allan's campaign pamphlet (1978)
119	– BYU Today's photo for February article (1978)
120	– Another farm photo for BYU Today article (1978)
121	– Whole family cleaning kitchen cabinets (1978-9)
122	– Stephani, Shauntel, and Stephen
123	– Stephen and David on their baptism day
124	– Steve on farm
125	– Becky, John, and Mike (1978)

	– Stephani, Shauntel, Stephen, and David (1978)
126	– Paul (1978) – Stephen and David
127	– Mike (1978) – Paul (1979)
128	– Grandma Ilene’s siblings: Don, Lorin and Burrell (circa 1928) – Paul with Steve (1978)
129	– Bishop Larsen helping Lester Belnap at high priest summer party (1979)
131	– Stephani with Steve at a Daddy/Daughter Date (1979)
132	– John (1979) – Becky
133	– David – Family pyramid (1979) – Steve (1979)
135	– Steve
136	– Spanish members celebrate the marriage of Hosea Tierso to Olga
137	– Family group (1980)
138	– Rick and Terry marry in Idaho Falls Temple on June 27, 1980 – Grandpa and Grandma Richards (circa 1980)
139	– Kids (1980) – Steve as new Farm Bureau Agent(1980)
140	– Kids
141	– Family group (1979)
145	– Barbara and Stephen with Susan
146	– Stephani
147	– Christmas (1980)
148	– Barbara and Allan – Susan as Stake Primary President (1975)
149	– Steve – Kids (circa 1980)
150	– Kids
151	– Summer scene on desert farm

	(1980) – Becky
152	– Timothy James Larsen (1981) – Blue house on desert on Allan’s farm (1980)
153	– Steve – Family group (1980)
154	– Rockford house (1981)
155	– Jonie Marie Johnson (1981)
156	– All mission conference in Boise with Elder Ezra Taft Benson
157	– John, Michael and Paul (1982)
160	– Steve (circa 1985-90)
161	– Susan at Larsen Christmas Party (1982-3)
163	– New home at 80 N 740 W Blackfoot
164	– Family group (1982) – Stephani and Shauntel
165	– John, Michael, and Paul – Jonie leaves following school year (May 1982)
166	– Steve and David play Little League Baseball (1982) – Family picture at Richards reunion at Redfish Lake
167	– Steve chaperones YW at Manti Pageant – Reunion at Redfish Lake
168	– Allan and Barbara – Mom – Steve and David
169	– Harvest time – Family group taken at Moses Lake, Washington(1982)
170	– Wood pile following wood cutting project at Grandpa Berkeley Larsen’s – Jonie – Steve hiking again!(1982)
172	– Stephani – Larsens at Christmas program

	(1982)
173	– Shauntel
174	– School pictures
	– Lisa and Don Bricker married December 11, 1982
175	– Paul and Tim
	– David rototilling our massive garden
178	– Steve receives “Rookie of the Year” award from Mutual of New York
179	– John, Mike and Paul and the infamous green Toyota (1983)
	– Family home
180	– Grandpa and Grandma Richards in yard in Moses Lake, Washington
	– Steve and Susan
181	– Stephani attends Prom (1983)
	– Jonie
182	– Stephen and David
	– Four little boys
	– Shauntel (1983)
183	– Karen marries Jim VanFleet on July 5, 1983
184	– Jonie
185	– Becky
	– Christmas at Grandma Larsens
187	– Becky wins second place at Elks Hoop Shoot (1984)
188	– Family group
	– Sue reading to John, Michael, Paul and Tim
189	– Stephani (1984)
	– Steve and Sue (1984)
190	– Stephani (1984)
	– Shauntel (1985)
191	– Jonie
	– Shauntel
192	– Family group (1984)
	– Stephani
193	– Boys with new Commodore Computer and cousin Lane
194	– Steve and David receive Eagle

	Scout award
195	– John with Grandpa Larsen at Larsen Christmas party (1984)
197	– Stephani
198	– Shauntel
199	– Grandpa and Grandma Richards on mission to California, San Jose (1984)
	– Dave at R & P Pallets
200	– Steve on fork lift at R@P Pallet
	– John mowing lawns
201	– Mike
	– Paul
202	– Paul (1996)
	– Tim
205	– Stephani featured in Blackfoot News article on Spud Harvest
206	– SaraKay after putting in long day in harvest (2007)
207	– Barbara and Allan at new baby grand piano that Barbara called her “Kwai Baby” (1974)
208	– Fine Arts “Family Affair” musical program (1991)
	– Stephani and Shauntel play a piano duet
209	– Christmas at Larsens
210	– “Stars and Stripes Forever”
	– Crawford Cup winners (1983)
211	– Steve and Dave(1980)
	– Jonie (1987)
212	– John and Becky
213	– Paul (1996)
	– Mike and Paul in cast for “Shenandoah”
214	– Tim
	– SaraKay at her first recital (1994)
215	– SaraKay performs concerto with Snake River Community orchestra:Mike and Marci with Amber; Stephani and Katie; Shauntel, and Mom and Dad show support

	– SaraKay with her teacher, Linnea Hammond
217	– Tim, Michael and Paul with Muffin
219	– Tim with Muffin
220	– Muffin
222	– Baby SaraKay July 9, 1990
223	– Mexican guests at Blackfoot West's stake conference(circa 1979)
224	– John – Mike
225	– Becky – Stephani – Stephen
226	– David and Andrea graduate from BYU – Shauntel graduates from BYU
227	– Laurel, John, Mike, Paul, and Jenny at BYU graduation – Becky graduates
228	– John, Laurel, Emma – Mike graduates – Steve, Jenny, Paul, and Mom
229	– Becky at Junior Miss performing "Autumn" – Becky wins state Junior Miss (1989)
230	– Lisa Bricker – Grandma Abby – Grandma and Grandpa Richards as temple workers in St. George Temple
231	– Extended Richards family at Grandma and Grandpa's 50 th wedding anniversary celebration
232	– Mom and Dad Richards with Nathan, Deniece, Lisa, Susan, Kathy, and Charles (1992)
233	– Salt Lake Temple
234	– One year old Bradley Cheney
235	– Bradley Cheney – Tim
236	– David examining Becky's foot under a microscope (Don't ask me

	why!)
	– Becky's black eye from bus accident (1980) – Michael
237	– Becky and John
238	– Mike and Paul
239	– Barbara and Allan
240	– Becky sporting her new glasses – Mike
241	– Don Cheney following his farm accident – Don after burned skin is removed
242	– Lake Powell reunion – David at Badger Creek reunion – Stephani repelling at Badger Creek
243	– Barbara on houseboat at Lake Powell reunion – Setting up tent at Lake Powell – Christmas at Larsens with Barbara
244	– John and Susan sing duet at Larsens Christmas party – Cousins at Larsen's Christmas party – Family group at Red Fish Lake reunion (1977)
245	– Extended Richards family group at reunion of 1977 – Richards siblings with Grandpa and Grandma Richards at 1991 reunion at Payette Lake – Richards reunion (1979)
246	– Richards reunion at Redfish Lake (1975) – Stephani – Shauntel
247	– Twins – Shauntel with Paul
248	– Kids on trampoline:John, Becky, Mike, Dave, Steve – Annual family Christmas nativity play
249	– Backyard at 80 North 740 West – David, Steve, Becky, Tim, Shauntel,

	Mike, John, and Paul after Saturday night baths
250	– Tim relaxing in his bedroom
	– “Four little boys” watching TV
251	– Spending the night on the tramp: Dave, John, Becky, Mike, Tim and Steve
	– Graduation time for Becky with John(1990)
252	– Mike, Paul, and Tim
253	– Tim, Brody Hanni, Paul, Brandon Hawker, and Mike looking sharp!
	– “Four little boys”
	– SaraKay dressed in her Halloween princess costume
254	– Mike
255	– John featured in local newspaper with Bo Jensen
	– Tim(1986-87)
	– Paul
256	– Tim
	– David and Stephen as Eagle Scouts
258	– John receives Eagle scout plaque from his father
	– John with Jeff Cook, Mom and Dad
259	– John, David, Steve and Dad sing for Mike’s program
260	– Mike receives Eagle
	– Paul receives his Eagle award
261	– Paul examines his Eagle project at Snake River Junior High School
262	– Tim receives the Eagle Scout award
263	– Dad at Woodbadge
264	– A common sight: Dad playing his trumpet at scout camp
266	– Stephani (1985)
268	– Shauntel(1986)
269	– Jonie (1987)
270	– Grandpa and Grandma Richards (1987)
271	– Stephen (1988)
272	– David (1988)

274	– Rebecca (1990)
275	– John (1992)
278	– Michael (1995)
279	– Paul(1996)
280	– Tim (1999)
282	– SaraKay (2008)